GRATTAN'S PARLIAMENT BEFORE AND AFTER

M. McDONNELL BODKIN, K.C.

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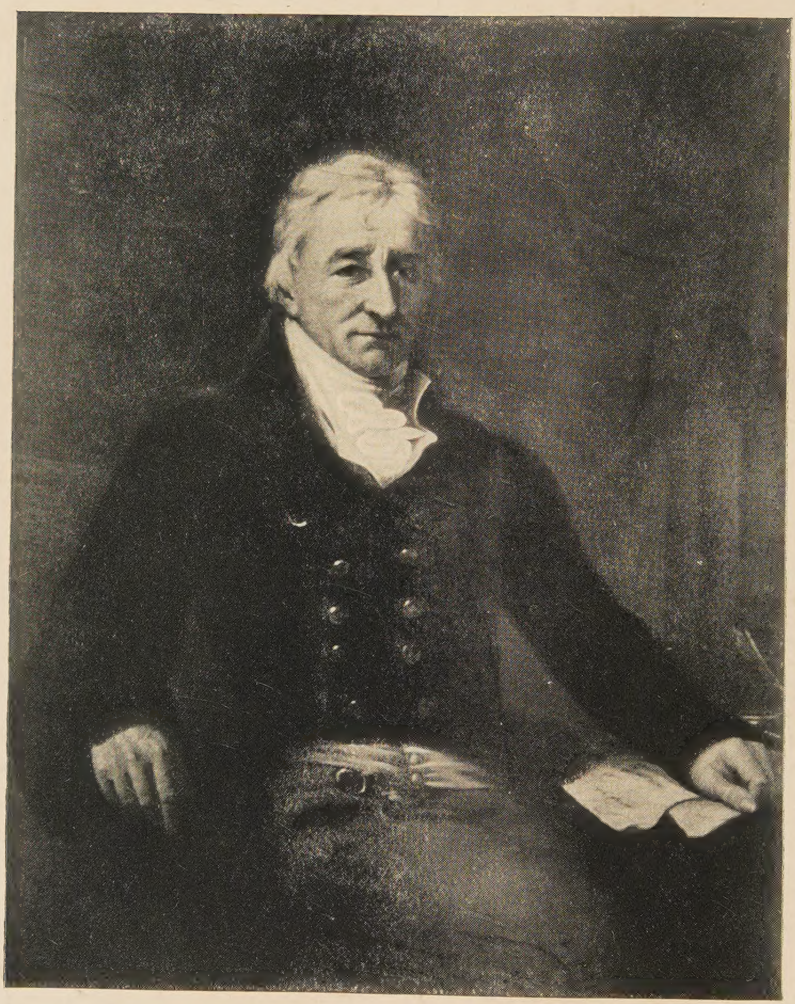

James Ramsay.]

[*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

HENRY GRATTAN.

From a copy made for Lady Laura Gratlan by Sir Thomas A. Jones, P.R.H.A., for the purpose of presentation to the National Gallery of Ireland, of the portrait in the possession of the Gratlan family.

GRATTAN'S PARLIAMENT

BEFORE AND AFTER

BY

M. McDONNELL BODKIN, K.C.

AUTHOR OF "TRUE MAN AND TRAITOR," "LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD," "THE REBELS," ETC.

WITH 33 ILLUSTRATIONS

T. FISHER UNWIN
LONDON: ADELPHI TERRACE
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Great-hearted Grattan! First of Irishmen,
Whose flaming words had such creative force.
He said, "Let Freedom be!" and Freedom was,
He watched beside her cradle and her grave,
When her own children struck the Nation down
And so his triumph ended in despair.
If in the dim world out beyond the grave
Poor human strivings move the soul at all,
If Grattan is our Irish Grattan still,
Then may we bid that patriot soul rejoice.
His Ireland was but sleeping and not dead,
And wakens in the dawn of liberty.

"Esto perpetua!"—his prayer is ours.

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PREFACE

In this history of the most interesting and eventful periods of Irish history the author makes no further claim to impartiality than is involved in the careful collection of the facts from the most reliable authorities. From those facts he has himself formed strong opinions which he is at no pains to conceal. On the contrary, he makes plain his purpose to convert or confirm the reader. In furtherance of that purpose impartial or hostile witnesses are summoned to court and an earnest effort is made to obey the precept, "Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice."

For the rest, the author is aware that as the first purpose of a book is to be read, its essential quality is to be readable. To this end he has endeavoured to reanimate the dead facts of history, to recall its striking characters, "in manner lively as they lived," to enliven the narrative with illustrative incident and anecdote and, so far as his powers permit, to present a vivid and faithful picture of the time.

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GRATTAN'S PARLIAMENT

CHAPTER I

PARLIAMENTS IN IRELAND

Olam Fodlagh and his "Council of the Nation"—Anglo-Irish Parliaments—The Statutes of Kilkenny—Strange enactments—The English "rebel" and the Irish "enemy"—Coygn and livery—The kingdom of Belzebub—The Statutes of Trim—The penalties of the moustache—A premium on murder.

By Grattan's Parliament Ireland's freedom was achieved and betrayed. Within the brief period of its existence are embraced the most important events of Irish history. An attempt is here made to recall the incidents of that exciting drama, to depict the splendour of the stage and the genius of the actors, "to show the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."

To solve the enigmas of Grattan's Parliament, its strength and weakness, its glory and its shame, the previous history of the country must be explored. Mr. Wells's high-pressure "Time Machine" must be borrowed for a rapid flight

through the centuries, from the first recorded Irish Parliament to the last.

"The grand epoch," writes the historian Plowden, "of political eminence in the early history of the Irish is the reign of their great and favourite monarch, Olam Fodlah, who flourished, according to Keating, about 950 before Christ. Under his was established the great Feis at Teamor or Tara, which was, in fact, a triennial convention of the states, or a Parliament."

"The monarch and the provincial and other kings, who had exclusive power in their hands, on one side, and the philosophers and druids, together with the deputies of the people on the other, formed the whole of this ancient legislation. When the great council was convened, previous to their entering on business they sat down to sumptuous entertainments for six days successively. Very minute accounts are given by the Irish annalists of the magnificence and order of these entertainments, from which we may collect the earliest traces of heraldry that occur in history and deduce that partiality for family distinctions which to this day forms a striking part of the Irish national character."

"To preserve order and regularity in the great number and variety of the guests who met together on those occasions, when the banquet was ready to be served up the shield-bearers of the princes and other members of the convention delivered in their masters' shields, which were readily distinguished by the coats-of-arms emblazoned upon

them. These were arranged by the Grand Marshal and principal herald upon the walls upon the right sides of the table, and on entering the apartment each member took his seat under his respective shield without the slightest disturbance.

" The first six days were not spent in disorderly revelling and excess, but were particularly devoted to the examining and settling of the historical antiquities and annals of the kingdom. They were publicly rehearsed and privately inspected by a select committee of the most learned of the members. When they had passed the approbation of the assembly they were transcribed into the authentic chronicles of the nation which was called ' The Register of the Psalm of Tara.' "

If Plowden's description is to be accepted as correct, Ireland has good reason to be proud of her first Parliament, grave, deliberate, and sedate, without the faintest flavour of Donnybrook Fair. The Irish, too, seem to have been the first to discover how intimately law, learning, and politics are associated with food, how close is the relation between a good dinner and a good speech. Learned Benchers are but humble emulators of Olam Fodlagh when they make dinners at the Inns an essential part of legal education ; and Prime Ministers when they planned the political campaign at a Greenwich dinner or delivered their most important announcements at a civil banquet at Guildhall were but following an Irish precedent thirty centuries old.

It is a long jump, almost twenty centuries, from

Olam Fodlagh to the first Anglo-Irish Parliaments, and the contrast is sharp between the grand representative assemblies of the Ancient Irish and the random gatherings of the British invader.

Mr. William Molyneux, in a remarkable pamphlet, to which it will be necessary to refer again, elaborately discusses the origin and authority of those Parliaments. Matthew Paris, stenographer to Henry III., is his warrant for the statement that " Henry II. a little before he left Ireland in a public assembly and council at Lismore did cause the Irish to receive and swear to be governed by the laws of England." Sir Edward Coke is cited to prove that Henry II. " did not only settle the laws of England in Ireland by the voluntary allowance and acceptance of the nobility and clergy but did likewise grant them the freedom of holding Parliaments in Ireland and did send them a ' modus ' to direct how such Parliaments should be held."

" I am sure," Molyneux adds, " it is not possible to draw a more fair original compact between a king and people than between Henry II. and the people of Ireland, that they should enjoy the like liberties and immunities and be governed by the same mild laws, both civil and ecclesiastical, as the people of England."

It is important, however, to clearly understand how that " compact " was fulfilled, what " liberties and immunities " were extended to the Irish people by the Anglo-Irish Parliaments in order to appreciate the " pleasing mildness " of the laws by which they were governed.

Plowden is warm in his praise of the " singular caution " exercised by Olam Fodlagh's Parliament to prevent the introduction of any falsity or misrepresentation into the national history. " Their precautions," he writes, " would have furnished posterity with the most interesting and authentic relations of this ancient and most extraordinary kingdom had not the Danes in their frequent ravages and invasions of Ireland during the ninth and tenth centuries burned all books and monuments of antiquities that fell in their way."

" We have still more reason," he adds, " to lament the shameful and fatal policy of our ancestors " (it must be remembered that Plowden was an Englishman), " who from the first invasion of Henry Plantagenet down to the reign of James I. took all possible means of art and force to destroy whatever writings had by chance or care been preserved from destruction at the hands of the Danes. They imagined that the perusal of such work kept alive the spirit of the natives and kindled them to rebellion by reminding them of the power, independence, and prowess of their ancestry."

Much of the same spirit has prevailed almost to the present day, excluding Irish history from school, college, and university, and urging a merciful oblivion for the wrongs and miseries Ireland has endured from English rulers. To this it may be fairly answered that when England remembers Ireland will be willing to forget. A very little knowledge of the subject should serve at least to dissipate English surprise at " Irish ingratitude."

We learn from Sir John Davis, than whom there can be no more reliable or impartial authority, that " notwithstanding the nominal or pretended conquest of the whole kingdom of Ireland by Henry II. and the confirmation thereof by Popes Adrian and Alexander, England's actual authority in the country was confined to the small territory of the Pale. Hence it is," he adds, " that in all the parliamentary rolls that are extant from the fortieth year of Edward III., when the Statutes of Kilkenny were enacted, to the reign of Henry VIII. we find the disobedient English called ' rebels ' but the Irish called ' enemies.' "

The Irish " enemies " were not provided for by Acts of Parliament, they were regarded as wholly outside the pale of law and humanity, and were dealt with as wild beasts. Nearly all the savage enactments of the Anglo-Irish Parliament in Kilkenny, held at the close of the reign of Edward III., were directed against the British " rebels " whose only crime seems to have been that they were willing to live in amity with the " Irish enemies."

In the preamble of the Statutes of Kilkenny it is set out that " the English in this realm before the coming over of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, were become mere Irish in their language, names, and apparel and in all their manner of living, and had rejected the English laws and subjected themselves to the Irish with whom they had made many marriages and alliances which tended to the utter ruin and destruction of the Commonwealth."

Alliance by marriage or nurture of infants

between English and Irish were, therefore, by this statute made high treason, with all the horrible penalties attached to this offence. It was further provided that " if any man of English race should use an Irish name or an Irish apparel or any other fashion or guise of the Irish if he had lands or tenements the same should be seized until he had given surety to Chancery to conform himself in all points to the English manner of living and if he had no land his body should be taken and imprisoned until he found sureties as aforesaid."

Those statutes sanctioned the custom of " coygne and livery," or free quarters for the soldiery, which all Irish historians are unanimous in denouncing Sir John Davis describes it as a " wicked and mischievous custom which consists in taking a man's house, meat, and money from all the inhabitants of the country, for the oppression was not limited to time or place." " It was indeed," he adds, " the most heavy oppression which was ever used in any heathen or Christian kingdom, and did draw down as great or greater plagues on Ireland than the oppression of the Israelites did draw down upon the land of Egypt. This extortion of Coygne and Livery did produce two most notorious effects: first it made the land waste and then it made the people idle, for when the husbandman had laboured all the year the soldiery might in one night consume all the fruits of his labour."

No doubt then, as in our own time, the promoters of the custom were loud in their denunciations of the " innate idleness " of the Irish race.

In a very ancient discourse on the decay of

Ireland it is written that " though this custom was first invented in Hell yet had it been used and practised there as it has been in Ireland it had long since destroyed the very kingdom of Belzebub."

The briefest possible summary must suffice of the " mild enactments " of subsequent Anglo-Irish Parliaments and the further extension of " English liberties and privileges " to the Irish people. By the fourth chapter of the Statutes of Trim it was enacted " that if any were found with their upper lips unshaven " (as was the Irish fashion), " it would be lawful for any man to take them and their goods as Irish enemies."

Another very singular statute was passed in the twenty-eighth year of Henry IV. which purported to " commit the punishment of offenders to every liege man of the king without any reference to trial by judge or jury." The provision was in intention and in effect a direct incitement to the private murder and robbery of the Irish natives by the English settlers on any pretence that cruelty or cupidity might devise. The English were expressly authorised to " take or kill such natives without any impeachment or grievance." As a further encouragement it was provided that every man " should be rewarded for such taking or killing by one penny of every plough and one farthing of every cottage within the barony " where the murder was committed. By the fiftieth of Edward VI. the premium for murder was still further increased and special provision made for its extortion.

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CHAPTER II

THE POLICY OF ENGLISH GOVERNMENT

Land—Religion—Commerce—The golden days of Good Queen Bess—Massacre and confiscation—Edmund Burke's estimate—The "semi-religious" Cromwell—"Glory to God"—And mercy to Ireland—Origin of the Irish land question.

ENGLISH policy in Ireland from first to last had three distinct objects. Firstly, the confiscation of Irish land; secondly, the persecution of Irish religion; thirdly, the destruction of Irish manufacture and commerce. To understand the rise and fall of the Irish Parliament it is necessary to briefly indicate by what methods these three objects were attempted and accomplished.

Confiscation of the land was, in the view of Edmund Burke, "the first object and the true genius and policy of English government in Ireland." This policy was vigorously and systematically prosecuted in the reign of Good Queen Bess, when the whole of Ireland gradually passed under English dominion. Let that impartial Unionist historian, Mr. Lecky, describe the methods of English government in Ireland under this beneficent sovereign and the results.

" The suppression of the native races," he writes, " was carried on with a ferocity which surpassed Alva in the Netherlands, and has seldom been exceeded in the pages of history." In this war of extermination, cruelty and treachery played equal parts. " Essex," Lecky continues, " accepted the hospitality of Sir Brian O'Neill. After the banquet when the Irish chief retired unsuspiciously to rest the English general surrounded the house with soldiers, captured his host with his wife and brother, sent them all to Dublin for execution, and massacred the whole body of his friends and retainers.

" An English officer, a friend of the Viceroy, invited seventeen Irish gentlemen to supper and as they rose from the table he had them all stabbed. A Catholic archbishop, named Hurley, fell into the hands of the English authorities and before they sent him to the gallows they tortured him to extort confessions of treason with the most horrible tortures human nature can endure, by roasting his feet."

" But these isolated episodes," the historian continues, " by diverting the mind from the broad features of the war, serve rather to diminish than enhance its atrocity. The war as conducted by Carew, by Gilbert, by Pelham, by Mountjoy was literally a war of extermination. The slaughter of Irishmen was looked upon as the slaughter of wild beasts. Not only men but even women and children who fell into the hands of the English were deliberately and systematically butchered."

"Bands of soldiers traversed great tracks of country slaying every living thing they met. The sword was not found sufficiently expeditious, but another method proved much more efficacious. Year after year over a great part of Ireland all means of human subsistence were destroyed. No quarter was given to prisoners who surrendered, and the whole population was skilfully and steadily starved to death. The pictures of the condition of Ireland at this time are as terrible as anything in the pages of human history."

The poet Spenser, describing what he had seen in Munster, tells how "out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forward on their hands, for their legs could not bear them. They looked like anatomies of death, they spoke like ghosts crying out of their graves, they did eat dead carrion, happy when they could find them, inasmuch as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves."

Holinshed declares that "the land itself, which before those wars was populous, well inhabited, and rich in all the blessings of God, being plenteous of corn, full of cattle, and well stored with other good commodities became so barren, both of men and beasts, that whoever did travel from one end of all Munster to the other, about six score miles, he would not meet any man, woman, or child, save in the cities, nor yet any beasts."

These, it must be remembered, are no imaginative pictures. They are the unexaggerated records of grave and impartial historians. It is not neces-

sary to enter further into the recital of those horrors which recur on every other page of Irish history. They serve to explain to the English people a problem by which they have been continuously puzzled—how British rule was, from the first, unpopular in Ireland.

Lest it be suggested by some apologist that this firm treatment was rendered necessary by the inherent wickedness of the Irish, infected by "a double dose of original sin," let us hear the testimony of Sir John Davies to the character of the Irish, a little later in the reign of James I.

"I dare affirm," he writes, "that for the span of five years past there have not been so many malefactors worthy of death found in all the six circuits of this realm (which is now divided into thirty-two shires at large), as in one circuit of six shires, namely, the western circuit of England. For the truth is," he adds, "that in time of peace the Irish are more fearful to offend the law than the English, or any other nation whatsoever."

In his famous letter to Sir Hercules Langushe, Edmund Burke declares that "the original scheme" (of confiscation) "was never departed from for a single hour." . . .

"A regular series of operations were carried on for the total extirpation of the interest of the natives in their own soil, until this subtle ravage being carried to the last extreme of insolence and oppression under Lord Strafford, it kindled the flames of that rebellion which broke out in the year 1641. By the issue of that war, by the turn

Lord Clarendon gave to the things at the Restoration and by the total reduction of the kingdom in Ireland in 1691, the ruin of the native Irish and in great measure of the race of English settlers was completely accomplished. Sweeping as were the confiscations under Whitworth and before they were completely out-distanced by the confiscations under Cromwell."

In very truth the atrocities which Ireland endured under Elizabeth paled their ineffectual fire before the atrocities of Cromwell, who opened up to the Irish people—

"A lower hell,
To which the hell they suffered seemed a heaven."

"The sieges of Drogheda and Wexford," writes Lecky, "and the massacres which accompanied them deserve to rank in history with the most atrocious exploits of Tilly or Wallenstein, and made the name of Cromwell eternally hated in Ireland." "At Drogheda," according to Carte, "the officers of Cromwell's army promised quarter to such as would lay down their arms, but when they had done so and the place was in their power Cromwell gave orders that no quarter should be given."

Ormond wrote that "the cruelties exercised there for five days would make as many several pictures of inhumanity as was to be found in the book of martyrs."

"In the letters of Cromwell," Lecky quaintly continues, "we have a curious picture of the semi-

religious spirit which was manifested, at least professed by the victors." Cromwell regards it as " a special instance of divine Providence " that the " Catholics, having on the previous Sunday celebrated mass in the great church of St. Peter, in this very place near a thousand of them were put to the sword," and he adds exultantly that " all their friars were knocked on the head promiscuously except two who were made prisoners and executed."

" Give me leave to say," he continues, " how the work was wrought. It was set upon some of our hearts that a great thing should be done, not by power or might but by the Spirit of God. Therefore it is good that God alone have all the glory. I wish that all honest men should give glory of this to God, to whom indeed the praise of this mercy belongs."

This is what Mr. Lecky regards as a " semi-religious " aspiration.

The historian, Sir Anthony Wood, estimates that at least three thousand were slain, exclusive of women and children. He describes the massacre in the church from the narrative of his brother, who was present. " The soldiers," we read, " caught up children as bucklers against the despairing resistance of their victims." " After they had killed all in the church," writes Thomas Wood, who took part in the assault, " they went into the vaults where were all the flower and choicest of the women and ladies." Wood attempted to save but one lady of all this swarm of virgins, but a soldier perceiving his intention, and actuated, no doubt, by a " semi-

religious" feeling, ran his sword through her bosom, and doubtless, as his pious commander enjoined, gave the glory of "this mercy" to God.

According to Sir William Petty, "at the close of this war out of a population of 1,466,000 over 616,000 (nearly half the entire population of the country) had perished by the sword, the plague, and by famine artificially produced."

The wholesale slaughter of the inhabitants was followed by the wholesale confiscation of the lands. "The end," writes Lecky, "at which the English adventurers had been steadily aiming since the reign of Queen Elizabeth was accomplished. All, or almost all the land of the Irish in the three largest and richest provinces was divided amongst these adventurers, and the confiscation was confirmed by Charles II. for whose father those rebels had fought."

Colonel Laurence, a Cromwellian soldier, calculated that before the rebellion the Irish had owned ten acres to one that was possessed by the English. After the "settlement" he estimated that the English possessed four-fifths of the whole kingdom.

This record of massacre and rabin is not pleasant to write or read. There are many worthy people who protest against recalling it to recollection. They desire that the terrible history of English rule in Ireland should remain a book permanently closed. "Let the dead past bury its dead," they urge; "why embitter the relations of the two countries by this record of wrongs inflicted and

endured?" But remembrance is essential to reform. It is only by the lessons of the past we can understand the present or anticipate the future. The record of these wholesale confiscations of Irish land, again and again repeated, will at least help to explain the existence of an Irish land question which so long puzzled English statesmen and to justify the agitation and legislation which is gradually restoring the land to the people, not by way of confiscation but with ample, even extravagant, compensation to the original confiscators.

CHAPTER III

"OUTLAWS AND ALIENS"

Proscribing a religion—Violating a treaty—Estimate of the Irish exiles by King Louis and King George—The Penal Code—Its proscriptions and penalties—A typical convert—Ten pounds for dead horses—Plunder not proselytism—Indictment by Burke—Ascendancy spirit survives—A caste not a creed.

THE second great object of English rule in Ireland was the degradation of Ireland's religion, or, to speak more precisely, the degradation of the great body of the inhabitants of Ireland by whom that religion was professed.

"There was but one thing," writes Lecky, "that the Irish people valued more than their land and that also was in peril." By the legislation of Elizabeth the Act of Uniformity was established in Ireland. All religious worship except the Anglican was made illegal and all persons who were absent from church without a sufficient reason were liable to a fine. England had put on and put off her religion as easily as a loose glove, at the successive orders of Henry VIII., Mary, and Elizabeth. But the Irish were not so tractable, and the result was the "penal laws"—a religious persecution which

in meanness and in savagery was without parallel in the history of the world, and of which some lingering traces still survive in Ireland.

Under King Charles I. the prosecution of Irish Catholics was slightly relaxed, but it was renewed with ferocious vigour under Cromwell, whose professed object was the extirpation of papacy. One of his adherents in Parliament declared that "the conversion of the Irish papist should be effected with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other," Pym called for "the extirpation of the priests," and Sir William Parsons boasted at a banquet that "before a twelvemonth there would not be a Catholic in Ireland."

There can be little doubt that this policy was mainly, if not wholly, responsible for the Irish rebellion which Cromwell suppressed with such unparalleled cruelty.

Only for one brief period, in 1689, when King James II. called together an Irish Parliament, did the Catholic majority exercise power in their own country. In view of the charges of intolerance now current against Irish Catholics it is interesting to recall some of the proceedings of that Parliament.

The Catholics who constituted that assembly had bitter provocation to reprisals. "There was probably," writes Lecky, "scarcely a man in the Irish Parliament of 1689 who had not been deeply injured by the penal enactments in his fortune and his family." Yet that Catholic Parliament, by its first Act, an Act which the Protestant historian confesses to be "far in advance of the age," established

absolute religious freedom and equality. By another Act, denying the right of English Parliaments to legislate for Ireland, it laid down the doctrine of Irish liberty, long after vindicated by Grattan and the Volunteers.

The authority of that Parliament was, unfortunately, of brief duration. But by their gallant stand at Limerick the Irish, under Sarsfield, obtained a pledge of religious toleration from the Orange leader who had failed ignominously to carry the town by storm. The Treaty of Limerick provided that "the Roman Catholics of this kingdom shall enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as are consistent with the laws of Ireland as they did enjoy in the reign of Charles II., and that their Majesties" (King William and Queen Mary), "as soon as their affairs will permit them to summon a Parliament in this kingdom, will endeavour to secure the said Roman Catholics such securities as may preserve them from any disturbance on account of their religion."

It was further provided that Catholics should be obliged "to take only an oath of allegiance and no other." This solemn treaty was, in the words of the Protestant poet Davis, "broken ere the ink wherewith 'twas writ was dry." Every one of its conditions were promptly, continuously, and systematically violated.

There is a strong temptation, which must be resisted, to follow the fortunes of the gallant Irish exiles who on their expulsion from Ireland transferred their allegiance to France. Their exploits

in the field, especially against the armies of England, form some of the most brilliant pages of continental history. Some busybody, it is recorded, once complained to King Louis that the Irish Brigade were "troublesome." "So all my enemies declare," retorted the king. "Cursed be the laws that rob me of such subjects!" exclaimed George II. when the news was brought to him of the Irish triumph at Fontenoy.

But while the Irish exiles rose to eminence in army and State in France and Spain, founding great families that still survive, their co-religionists in Ireland were subjected to intolerable persecution.

Just six months after the signing of the Treaty of Limerick, Catholics were by statute excluded from Parliament and all office, civil, military, and ecclesiastic. This was but the first of a long series of similar enactments. The learned professions were tabooed, the purchase or rental of land was forbidden. Their best horse might be purchased by a Protestant for £5. Catholics were deprived of franchise for Parliament or any corporate body. They were subjected to irresponsible night visitations in quest of arms. They were wholly debarred from education in accordance with their faith. It was penal to educate a Catholic child at home or abroad.

These disabilities were enforced by terrible penalties, the position of spy was made "honourable" by Act of Parliament, and he was encouraged by liberal rewards in the practice of his distinguished profession.

Having deprived the Irish Catholic of all rights of citizenship and property, the penal laws invaded his domestic life. It was enacted in the reign of Queen Anne that any child of a Catholic father who turned Protestant should be entitled to oust him from his estate, and it was further provided that in no case would a Catholic father be allowed to be the guardian of his Protestant child.

The Catholics were permitted to petition by counsel at the Bar of the House of Commons against the passing of this inhuman Act, and the speech of the famous Catholic advocate, Sir Theobald Butler, still extant, is a masterpiece of persuasive eloquence. He entered a powerful appeal against the invasion of the sanctity of the home and the perversion of natural feeling encouraged by the statute.

"It is but too common," he said, "for a son who has a prospect of an estate when he arrives at the age of twenty-one to think the old father too long in the way between him and the prospect. How much more will he be subject to such unfilial impatience when by this Act it is possible for him, before he comes of age, to compel and enforce my estate from me? Is not this against the laws of God and man, against the rules of reason and justice by which all men ought to be governed? Is not this the only way in the world to make children become undutiful and bring the grey hairs of the parent to the grave with grief and tears? It would be hard from any man, but a son, the fruit of my body whom I have nursed in my

bosom and tended more dearly than my own life, to become my plunderer is more grievous than from another and enough to make the most flinty heart to bleed."

The House of Commons heard him to the end and unanimously passed the Bill into law.

Still more stringent provisions were enacted against the Catholic bishops and clergy, who were commanded to depart from the country, and subjected to be hanged, drawn, and quartered if they returned. One statute of incredible infamy was passed in the Irish House of Commons by which Catholic priests in Ireland were made subject to unspeakable mutilation, but this ferocious penalty was struck out by the English Cabinet.

This intolerable code had not even the poor excuse of religious zeal. It was designed not to convert, but to plunder and degrade the Catholics of Ireland. The rare conversions were of the type described in that amusing book, "The Irish at Home and Abroad," which tells how a Mr. Groghan, resident in London, being alarmed lest a relative should conform to the Protestant religion and so rob him of a considerable property in Meath, repaired at once to Dublin, reported himself to the necessary authorities, professed in all its prescribed form the Protestant religion, sold his estates on Monday, and relapsed into Popery on Tuesday.

When questioned as to his motive, he replied: "I would sooner trust my soul to God for a day than my property to the devil for ever."

On Sunday afternoon, the day of his conversion,

he visited the coffee-house in Essex Street, then one of the most select in Dublin, and putting his hand on his sword and throwing round a glance of defiance he said: " I read my recantation to-day, and any one who says I did right is a rascal."

Occasionally a Catholic succeeded in eluding the rigour of the law or at least in disappointing the greed of his Protestant neighbour. The story is told of a Catholic gentleman, a brother of the convert just referred to, who drove into an assize town with a pair of splendid horses attached to his carriage. As he was standing at the horses' heads in the inn yard a rich Protestant neighbour named Stepney approached him.

" Groghan," he said, " that is a capital pair to your coach. I have rarely seen better horses or better matched. Here are ten guineas, the horses are mine."

" One moment, if you please," replied Groghan. He drew a pair of pistols from his holsters and shot the horses through the head. Then as he took the ten guineas from the hand of the astonished Stepney he offered him one of the pistols instead. " Here and now," he said, " if you please." But Stepney fled without claiming his horses, and ever after Groghan drove oxen harnessed to his carriage. This incident must have occurred in the early days of penal laws, which in a later stage strictly forbid Catholics to carry arms.

In an article in the *Cornhill Magazine*, " Old Election Days in Ireland," published in 1865 when Thackeray was editor, there is a more tragic illustration of Catholic disabilities.

" It is a very singular fact that in the old election days in Ireland a Protestant might lose his franchise by what the law called an ill-assorted marriage. A Protestant elector who married a Roman Catholic lady was bound to convert her within a year if he wished to preserve his vote. For example, at the election for Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, in 1761, the agent for one of the candidates tendered his vote, whereupon the opposing agent starting up and disclaiming, ' You know you married a Papist ! ' disfranchised him at once ; for this was not only the fact but the husband had failed to bring over the wife to his own Church within the time appointed by law. The disfranchised agent challenged his disfranchiser, and as in those days Irish gentlemen always carried their own ' reporters ' or pistols with them, the two adversaries walked to Clonmel Green on the banks of the Suir to settle their tempers. They were followed by an excited mob, whose entire sympathy was with the liberal and disfranchised agent.

" Pistol duels," the writer continues, not quite accurately, " at the time were commonly fought on horseback, and our brace of agents, with a brace of pistols to each, were in saddle moving their horses in narrow circles round each other till opportunity presented itself for firing with effect. In those days aim was taken, murder was meant, and the boast of ' killing one's man ' was made without apologetic paraphrase of hypocritical euphuism. The objecting agent was first on this occasion to recognise opportunity ; delivering his fire he shot

his antagonist through the heart, and the poor fellow rolled dead from the saddle on to the green. A scream of execration and a cry of vengeance went up from the exasperated mob, and there would have soon been another mutilated wretch upon the turf had he not had the presence of mind to again recognise opportunity. He plunged, horse and rider, into the Suir, and swimming to the opposite bank, escaped across the country.

"As for the poor fellow who had lost his vote and life because he had neglected to convert his wife, the killing of him was doubtless illegal. Dead, the law would not avenge him; living, the law despised him. He was stigmatised as a 'constructive Papist'—a more odious sort of Papist than one who was a Roman Catholic by birth, education, profession, and principle."

Thus, stripped bare of liberty and property and every civil and social right, the Irish Catholics, numbering two millions to the half million of their Protestant masters, were veritable helots in their native land. In 1775 an action was brought against a respectable merchant for the recovery of a young Catholic lady who had taken refuge in his house from the persecution of a Protestant relative and had been forcibly abducted. Judgment was given against him with costs, and he was admonished from the Bench that "the law did not presume a Papist to exist in the kingdom nor could they so much as breathe there without the connivance of the Government."

The Government kindly connived at their exist-

ence for the purpose of taxation and persecution. Nor can it be said here as in other countries the subject race was inferior in any respect to their masters. Their one crime, their one badge of inferiority, was that they held by their ancient religion which their masters had abandoned, but which was still professed by France, Italy, and Spain, the greatest nations on the continent.

Macaulay, who certainly cannot be regarded as specially indulgent to Catholic claims, summarises the effect of the penal laws. "There were, indeed, Irish Catholics of great ability, energy, and ambition, but they were to be found everywhere except in Ireland, at Versailles, and at Ildefonso, in the armies of Frederick and in the armies of Marie Thérèse. One exile became a marshal of France, another became Prime Minister of Spain. If he had stayed in his native land he would have been regarded as an inferior by all the ignorant and worthless squireens who drank the glorious and immortal memory. In his palace at Madrid he had the pleasure of being assiduously courted by the ambassador of George II. and of bidding defiance in high terms to the ambassador of George III."

Arthur Young believed that the penal code aimed "not so much at the religion as at the property of the Catholics." "The domineering aristocracy of fifty thousand," he writes, "feel the sweets of having two million slaves and have not the least objection to the tenets of the religion which keeps them by the law of the land in subjection."

"Outlaws and Aliens"

In Erskine May's Constitutional History, Irish Catholics are described as "outlaws and aliens, for ages ruled by a privileged race. Their lands were wrested from them, their rights trampled underfoot, their blood and their religion proscribed."

Edmund Burke also confirms the view that the penal code was framed rather to plunder than to proselytise. "From what I have observed," he writes to an Irish peer, "it is pride, arrogance, and the spirit of domination, not a bigoted spirit of religion, that has caused and kept up those oppressive statutes." His letter to Sir Hercules Langushe is a scathing indictment of the code. "You abhorred it as I did," he writes, "for its vicious perfection, for I must do it justice, it was a complete system, full of coherence and consistency, well digested and well composed in all its parts. It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."

If the penal code, its spirit, object, and effects have been dealt with somewhat in detail in these pages it is with no desire to recall the memories of a miserable past but to help to a right understanding of the incompetence, corruption, and final collapse of Grattan's Parliament. If there had been no penal code in Grattan's time, or if Grattan's Declaration of the Independence of the Irish Parliament had been promptly followed, as he desired, by Catholic Emancipation, the country would have

been spared the savagery which provoked the rebellion of '98 and the bribery and corruption that carried the Union.

Nor is it to be forgotten that something of the penal code still survives in Ireland. Protestantism is still as much a caste as a creed. The Orange protest against Home Rule is, consciously or unconsciously, dictated by the old spirit of domination. It is equality they fear; it is ascendancy they desire and demand. They are jealous as an Indian Brahmin of their caste and its privileges.

CHAPTER IV

"A RICH AND GENEROUS SISTER"

"A rich and generous sister"—Irish rivalry—British fair play—The strangling of the Irish woollen trade—Rivalry stamped out—The massacre of the innocents—The condition of Ireland—Continuous famine—Swift's modest proposal—Lecky's harrowing description.

ENGLAND has been described as the "rich and generous sister" of Ireland; it is interesting to ascertain how far the description has heretofore been deserved.

Of the three objects to which British policy in Ireland was devoted, the third was to England the most important. At all hazards British trade must be protected from Irish rivalry. Nor was the danger trifling or remote. Ireland, in the teeth of all obstacles, developed a most alarming aptitude for commerce, and as each new industry threatened successful rivalry it was ruthlessly exterminated by the British Government.

The first attack was on the Irish cattle trade. At the instance of English landlords the importation of any live stock of any kind into England was described as "unnecessary and destructive to the welfare of the kingdom and a public nuisance" and strictly prohibited. Dead meat, butter, and

cheese were after included in the prohibition. The exclusion of Irish sheep from England had, however, an unexpected result. It served to develop a flourishing Irish woollen trade, whereupon the English woollen manufacturers in their turn petitioned for its suppression.

In Murray's "History of Commercial Relations between England and Ireland" there is a full account of those urgent petitions, especially from the clothiers of the West of England. The author frankly admits that there did seem some reason to fear that the West of England clothing trade was being rapidly transferred to Dublin.

There was no pretence in those petitions of justice or fair play. Clamorously, shamelessly, greedily they called out to the British King and the British Parliament for the destruction of their rivals, and in the same spirit the British King and Parliament responded to their prayer. William III. pledged himself that he would "do all in his power to discourage Irish trade," and his Parliament gave full effect to his pledge. The preamble of the statute tenth of William III. dwells on the vital importance of a woollen trade to the prosperity, almost to the existence of a nation, and then proceeds without scruple or shame to kill the flourishing woollen trade in Ireland.

It sets out in its preamble "forasmuch as the woollen manufacture of cloth, serge, kerseys, and other stuffs, made or mixed with wool, are the greatest and most profitable commodities of this kingdom on which the value of the land and the

trade of the nation do chiefly depend, and whereas great quantities of like manufactures have been made and are daily increasing in the kingdom of Ireland and exported thence to foreign markets heretofore supplied by England, which will inevitably sink the value of land and lead to the ruin of the trade and woollen manufacture of this realm, be it therefore enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons in their Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same.

"That no person and persons whatsoever, from and after the twenty-fourth day of June, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand, six hundred and ninety-nine, shall directly or indirectly export, transport, ship off, carry or convey, cause or procure to be exported, transported, shipped off, carried or conveyed out of the said Kingdom of Ireland into any foreign realm, states, or dominion, or to any parts or places whatsoever other than parts within the kingdom of England or the Dominion of Wales any wool fells, shortlings, mortlings, wool flocks, worsted, woollen yarn, clothes, serges, boys' kersies, frieses, druggets, shalloons, or any drapery stuff or woollen manufacture whatsoever, made or mixed with wool or wool flocks, nor shall directly or indirectly load or cause to be loaded on any horse, cart, or carriage, or boat, or laid on board any ship or port in or belonging to the said Kingdom of Ireland, any wool fells, shortlings" (here the litany of woollen stuffs is repeated), "to the intent or

purpose to export, transport, ship off, carry or convey or cause the same to be exported, transported, shipped off, carried or conveyed out of the said Kingdom of Ireland, or out of any port or place belonging to the same with the intent or purpose that any person or persons whatsoever should export, transport, ship off, carry or convey the same out of the said Kingdom of Ireland into any ports or places except as aforesaid."

In plain, short words the exportation of any form of Irish woollen manufacture was prohibited. The penalty provided for the newly created "offence" was the forfeiture of all the goods carried, of the ship that carried them, and a fine of £500 on the offender. The penalty of loading goods was £40. Special encouragement was offered to informers, and it was thoughtfully provided that an acquittal in Ireland should be no bar to the prosecution and conviction of the "offender" in England. By a wholly prohibitive impost Irish woollens were also effectually shut out from "the kingdom of England and the dominion of Wales."

In a similar fashion every other Irish industry that threatened the least rivalry to England was ruthlessly destroyed. Cotton-spinning, glass manufacture, milling, tanning, sugar-refining, and shipbuilding were all in turn ruined by heavy taxes and prohibitive navigation laws.

It is not necessary to enter into further details. *Cremine ab uno disce omnes.* The suppression of the Irish woollen trade sufficiently illustrates the frank methods of the British Parliament where Irish

interests were concerned. Only one Irish industry survived this massacre of the innocents. The linen trade of the north, which in no way affected the commercial interests of England, was allowed to live.

While her industries were thus systematically ruined the impoverished country was bled white by extortionate taxation. She was subjected to the crushing cost of a military establishment, continuously increasing and wholly uncontrolled. It was estimated that about the middle of the eighteenth century the cost of the military establishment in Ireland in times of peace was generally three times as much as the cost of the civil establishment. In time of war the cost was, of course, enormously increased. During the greater part of that century the permanent military establishment in Ireland was larger in proportion to the population than in Great Britain, irrespective altogether of the vast disproportion of wealth in the two countries. Irish resources were further drained into England by the absenteeism of the highly-salaried officials. The most lucrative Irish posts paid for with Irish money were conferred on Englishmen resident in England.

A still more intolerable grievance was the enormous and ever-growing burden of pensions to which the Irish Exchequer was subjected. A great proportion of these pensions were for French Protestants resident in England, a still larger proportion was bestowed for purposes of corruption. Whenever it was desired to create a pension for

motives too shameful to be tolerated in England, it was planted forthwith on the Irish establishment. To take a few typical examples. William III., of pious and immortal memory, in 1751 granted to the Countess of Yarmouth, a pension of £4,000 a year, to be paid out of the Irish Exchequer. A pension of £5,000 was paid to the Princess of Hesse and £2,000 a year to Prince Frederick of Brunswick.

It is no wonder that the Irish National Debt increased, the Irish Treasury was continuously empty, and the country plunged in unimaginable poverty. While the Irish Protestants oppressed and plundered their Catholic fellow-countrymen, they were themselves oppressed and plundered by the English. The Catholics were denied even the poor privilege of protest. Complaint, feeble for the most part and intermittent, came from the Protestant minority.

Lecky, quoting from contemporary writers, gives an appalling picture of the condition of the great body of the Irish during the eighteenth century.

"The Irish tracts of Swift," he writes, "and especially his admirable short view of the state of Ireland, and that ghostly piece of irony, 'A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Poor of Ireland from Being a Burden to their Parents and their Country,' which was written in 1729, tell the same tale"—a tale of awful misery.

Swift's "modest proposal" for alleviating the famine, by cooking and eating the children of the poor, was written with such simple force and

backed by such plausible argument that many mistook its savage irony for earnest—a mistake which in itself is an illuminating comment on the misery he described.

"The latter tracts," writes Lecky, "appeared at a time when three terrible years of dearth had reduced the people to the last extremity." The old and sick, Swift assures us, were every day dying and rotting by cold, famine, filth, and vermin.

"In twenty years," Lecky continues, "there were at least three or four absolute famines, and that of 1740-41, which followed on the great frost at the end of 1739, though it has hardly left a trace on history and hardly excited any attention in England, was one of the most fearful on record."

"Want and misery," writes a contemporary observer, "are in every face. The rich unable to relieve the poor, the road spread with dead and dying bodies, men's faces the colour of the docks and nettles they feed on."

Berkeley, who was then Bishop of Cloyne, in a letter to his friend the poet Prior in May, 1741, writes: "The distresses of the sick and poor are endless. The havoc of mankind in Cork, Limerick, and some of the adjacent places hath been incredible. About two months since I heard Sir Richard Cox say that five hundred were dead in the parish, though in a country I believe not very populous."

Skelton, a Protestant clergyman of considerable literary talents and of great energy and benevolence of character, wrote at the close of the famine a very remarkable letter. "It was," he writes, "com-

puted by some persons, not without reason, that as many people died of want, or of the disorder occasioned by want, in the last two years as fell by the sword in the massacre of 1641. Whole parishes in some places were almost desolate. Thousands in a barony have perished, some of hunger and others of disorders occasioned by the unnatural and putrid diet."

"By a moderate computation," said another writer, who lived in the County of Tipperary, "very near one third of the poor cottars of Munster have perished by fevers, fluxes, and downright want," and he describes with terrible vividness and energy the scenes which he witnessed round his own dwelling. "The charity of the landlords and the farmers is almost quite exhausted, multitudes have perished and are daily perishing under hedges and ditches in the utmost agonies of despair. I have seen the labourer endeavouring to work at his spade but fainting from want of food and forced to quit it. I have seen the ancient father eating grass like a beast, and in the anguish of his soul wishing for dissolution. I have seen the helpless orphan exposed on the field and none to take him in for fear of infection. I have seen the infant sucking at the breast of the already expiring parent."

There is no need to dwell further on these harrowing details. But some description of the condition to which foreign extortion and domestic oppression had reduced the people of Ireland was essential as a necessary prelude to the history of the rise and fall of Grattan's Parliament.

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CHAPTER V

THE JOURNAL OF THE IRISH HOUSE OF COMMONS

Parliament in the Castle—Quaint pictures of old days—How members "expounded" themselves—Questions of privilege—Singular exemptions—The wearing of gowns—Precedent of Julius Caesar—Domination of the Whips—Five pounds per private Bill—First protest, grievance before supply—Removal to Chichester House.

In the earlier centuries of British occupation Irish Parliaments were, as has already been said, desultory and irregular, making no pretence to represent any section of the people. They were held at the whim of the King or the King's deputy in Ireland, who summoned when he pleased, where he pleased, and whom he pleased.

The first regular journals of the Irish House of Commons, still extant, open with the official record of a Parliament summoned in the eleventh year of James I. and extends in an unbroken series to the extinction of the Irish Parliament by the Act of Union. But those earlier assemblies were of spasmodic origin, of irregular duration, and of little or no authority. It was not until the Irish Commons came to sit in the old House in College

Green that there was anything even faintly resembling a Parliament in the modern acceptation of the word.

Scrappy and unconnected as are those records and difficult to understand without an intimate knowledge of the history of the times, they have a peculiar interest of their own. They are full of quaint phrases, they recall strange customs. To read them is like turning over the pages of an out-of-date photograph album, with its procession of curious costumes and faded, unfamiliar faces. Men with whose names we are familiar and men whose names we have never heard, great men and small, come back to us out of the forgotten past in manner as they lived. The reports, though often as abrupt and incoherent as an economic telegram, give a vivid picture of the times.

Here are some verbatim extracts from the first volume of those old-world reports :—

"*Die Martis,* 18 *Octobris.*"

"The bill entitled an Act of Attainder of the Earl of Tyrone read a first time."

"Any man may speak on the first or second reading if they will, but it is unusual."

There follows this quaint summary of the debate :—

"Sir John Everard—*Comes qui concomitatus cum rege in bello*—aggravating the offence by the multitude of favours bestowed upon Tyrone by the late king and the now queen."

"Sir Oliver St. John—touching the part of Sir John Everard's speech that concerned the gentle-

man's speech that first spoke against the Act of Attainder."

" Mr. Treasurer—that touching the digression he that gave occasion should expound himself but desiring that it should die."

" Mr. Fernham expounded himself."

So much for the Earl of Tyrone, the House passes to its next business.

" The bill entitled An Act to take away Clergy in Certain Cases was read this day a third time."

" Mr. Lutterell—to the bill. *Humanum est errare semul infanum omnes concurre* with our forefathers."—Mr. Lutterell's Latin seems suddenly to have failed him, but he resumes in the same classical vein : " (1) *Alcibiades,* (2) *Augustus, imperatores: Leges adaptanda &. in minimis omnia antiqua observata* "—then he drops again into English, " if in little things much more in this which concerneth the life of man."

It is not always easy to catch the drift of the orator, but it is not due to any slip of pen or printer. Everything printed within inverted commas is taken verbatim from the journals.

On the exciting question of Parliamentary Privilege, to which a great portion of the time of the House was devoted, the records are much more explicit. For example :—

" *Die Sabbati, Octobris 1614.*"

" Sir Thomas Ruish gave the House to understand that Thomas Gibbs, a servant of his was arrested. Whereupon it was ordered that the Sergeant of this House should go with his mace

to the prison and bring as well the prisoner and the officer that arrested him and the creditor Carey, to the House."

Later on it is ordained :—

" A warrant to be granted for the privilege of Thomas Gibbs."

" The charges of Gibbs to be borne by Carey or his man in whom the fault shall appear."

" The sergeant or officer who made the arrest to be imprisoned in the Castle, there to remain until on his petition the House shall be pleased to give an order for his enlargement."

" The sergeant at arms to fetch Carey's man from his shop on Monday next at nine of the clock and therefore Carey is enjoined to have his man there ready, and that Carey himself shall then attend the pleasure of the House."

Finally : " John Carey's man was brought to the Bar when he confessed that he caused Gibbs to be arrested."

" Upon the question it was resolved that the said John Carey shall pay unto the said Thomas Gibbs ten pounds sterling for his charges and *that* before he be released and then they are both to be dismissed."

It is to be observed that this affair of Carey and Gibbs occupies a far larger space in the records than the Attainder of the Earl of Tyrone. It was well to be a servant of a member of Parliament in those days and enjoy an immunity from payment of debts, but one cannot avoid a certain sympathy with the unfortunate creditor, Carey.

Later on a very much wider privilege is claimed :—

"*Die Veneris 4 Novembris 1614.*"

"Mr. Connell O'Farrell moved that a tenant of his was served with a subpœna and so he desired the privilege of the House."

"Whereupon it was conceived and observed that a Member of the House or any of his servants ought not to be disturbed in that kind, but whether the tenant of any member ought to be privileged from such disturbance it was thought doubtful and therefore referred to the consideration of the Grand Committee."

"*Die Veneris 18 Novembris 1614.*"

"On question it was ordered and set down for a rule that every attorney in any suit against a member of this House shall be punishable here as well as the principal, but not the learned counsel."

Here are two curious extracts :—

"*Die Lunae 24 Octobris 1614.*"

"It is this day allowed by the House for a rule that five pounds be given to the poor for every private bill that passeth."

"*Die Veneris 28 Apriles 1615.*"

"Patrick Keary, a member of this House is this day licensed to depart home on allegation that his wife is like to die."

The authority of the Whips seems to have been even more tyrannical in those days than in ours.

From its earliest history to its extinction the Irish Parliament concerned itself exceedingly with questions of costume. Full Court dress was the

rule for the members attending the House, a rule violated on one historical occasion by Colonel Tottenham's sudden appearance in boots. But Sir John Everard, who seems to have kept himself prominently before the assembly, was not satisfied with even this distinction.

"Sir John Everard,—motion touching the wearing of gowns: alleging for example Julius Caesar and Sir John Norris in the last Parliament."

"Sir Charles Nugent,—how that Mr. Harpal borrowed a short gown the last Parliament."

"Mr. Galloway confirmed it: being one of the members of that House then."

"Agreed by the House that, touching the several motions for coming in gowns the Grand Committee shall peruse and consider the testimonies and precedents of the last Parliament."

The decision of the Grand Committee on this momentous question is not recorded, but it would seem that they declined to follow the precedents of Julius Caesar, Sir John Norris, and Mr. Harpal, and poor Sir John Everard had to come without even a short gown.

The queerest discussions seem to have occasionally sprung up in the House, apropos of nothing at all. Here is an example:—

"*Die Mercurie, 3 May, 1615.*"

"Any man who is an adherent to a Jesuit desireth to be had at the Bar."

There is not the faintest hint how or from whom this sapient suggestion originated, but forthwith the irrepressible Sir John Everard "expounded him-

self " somewhat incoherently, to the following effect. The reporter seems to have been so impressed with his eloquence that he allots more space than usual to his speech.

" If he have over run himself to have the favour to explain, and if he have offended he shall be the first that shall punish him. But to him that knoweth there is a God and under God a king, and that Caesar must have that given to him which belongeth to Caesar, if any one here will stick to a Jesuit he will spit in his face."

To a certain Mr. Sutton belongs the credit of first raising a question on a money Bill in the Irish House of Commons, which, later in its history, was so profoundly agitated by questions of the kind.

" *Dies Sabbati 22 Appriles 1615*."

" The House being met and set this day, by eight of the clock in the morning with intent and purpose to read the Act of Subsidy. Before it began : "

" Mr. Sutton moved the House that in regard that it tended to the King's private profit it might be deferred till other acts that tended to the common good of the weal public were first read, alleging that the old saying would be else verified : ' Little said soon amended, A subsidy granted the Parliament ended.' "

Mr. Sutton was, however, instantly over-ruled and no further objection was taken to any money Bill while the Parliament sat in Dublin Castle.

On the 18th of May, 1661, the Irish Parliament, evicted from the Castle, met for the first time at

Chichester House (originally Carey's Hospital) on the site of which now stands the Parliament House in College Green. Chichester House could not be regarded as a costly accommodation for the two Houses of Parliament. The main building was leased to the Crown "together with two small cellars, a gate-house next the street containing two small rooms, a stable yard with a range of old buildings, a coal yard and stable and house of office, a large garden with an old banqueting hall and a house of office to have and to hold the same for ninety-nine years, paying the rent of £22 for the first six months and for the next ensuing year and six months the yearly rent of £105 and for the residue of the term the yearly rent of £108."

The first Parliament that met in Chichester House was composed exclusively of Protestants, with the exception of one Catholic and one Anabaptist, both, curiously enough, from Tuam, Co. Galway.

Sir Audley Mervin, the Speaker, in his official address to the Lords Justices, observed: "I may warrantably say since Ireland was happy under an English Government there never was so choice a collection of Protestant fruit that ever grew within the walls of the Commons' House. Your lordships have piped in your summons to this Parliament and the Irish have danced."

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that it was this "choice" Parliament which passed the Acts of Settlement and Expropriation. "Placing," as Gilbert writes, "the Cromwellian adventurers in

the lands of the Irish adherents of the Stuarts, a measure of sweeping and appalling oppression perhaps without parallel in the history of civilised nations."

While the Irish House of Commons still sat in Chichester House there was an occasional feeble and tentative protest against England's absolute control of its legislation, administration, and finance, but it was not until the present Parliament House was built that the battle began.

Chichester House was gradually falling into a ruin like the Parliament it held. A committee, appointed for the purpose, reported that the outer walls dangerously overhung the foundation, and the wall plates and bottoms of the rafters were so decayed that but for timely repairs the roof must have fallen. As it was found impossible to put the whole building in proper repairs, the erection of a new House on the old site was resolved upon.

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CHAPTER VI

THE OLD HOUSE IN COLLEGE GREEN

The laying of the foundation-stone—Doubts as to the architect.—Captain Edward Lovet Pearce the man—Votes of thanks by the Commons—Additions by the famous architect Gandon—Alleged incongruity—Different orders of architecture—"Substantial order of the House of Lords."

ON the 1st of January, 1728, six thousand pounds was voted towards providing materials and building a new Parliament House, and the receiving of plans and proposals was intrusted to a committee. On the 3rd of February the first stone of the new building was laid with great ceremony by the Lords Justices attended by several peers, the King-at-Arms, the Sergeant-at-arms, Captain Lovet Pearce, to whom eventually the building was entrusted, and a great crowd of spectators. The foundation-stone, a huge hewn white block with a cavity in the centre, was placed in its bed by Primate Boulter, who removed the prop by which it was supported, after which it was adjusted by the Lords Justices, assisted by the King-at-Arms, who at certain intervals waved his handkerchief for the state musicians to play. A large silver plate

bearing the following somewhat uncouth inscription was placed in the cavity of the stone :—

REX GEORGIUS SECUNDUS PER EXCELLENT. DOMINUM JOHANEM DOMINUM CARTARET ET BARON DE HAWES LOCUM TENENTUM, ET PER EXCELLENT DOMINOS HUGONEM ARCHEP. ARMACHAN. THOMAN WINDHAM. CANCELL. GUIEL. CONNOLLY DOM. HOM. PROLACIT. JUSTICIARIOS GENERALES, PRIMUM HUJUSCE DOMUS PARLIAMENT. LAPIDUM POSUIT, TERTIA DIE FEBRUARII ANNO DOM. MDCCXXVIII

The inscription, it will be observed, antedates the laying of the foundation-stone by a year. With the plate was deposited gold of George I. and George II. and his queen, and the aperture was closed up by a small stone bound down with iron bars.

Thomas Burgh was desired to prepare plans for the new Parliament House, but Captain Edward Lovet Pearce, who succeeded Burgh as Surveyor-General, appears in all official documents as the designer and the director, and seems to have displayed as much devotion in the construction as genius in the conception of this magnificent building.

The committee appointed to inquire what progress was made reported in September, 1729, that they could not help observing with greatest pleasure an uncommon beauty, order and contrivance in the building and that the same had been carried out with unusual expedition and diligence, that the money expended thereon had been laid out with the utmost frugality and the accounts thereof kept in the most regular and orderly manner."

The committee further reported that "the director appointed by the Government had attended said work from the beginning with the utmost application and thereby saved a large sum to the public which in the course of such work by the ordinary method must necessarily have been expended and at the same time had charged nothing for his own great expense, skill and pains."

On the same day the report was laid on the table of the Commons, and the payment of a thousand pounds was unanimously voted to Captain Edward Lovet Pearce "for the care and pains he had taken for contriving and carrying out the building of the New Parliament House." In 1731 he was voted an additional thousand for his care and pains.

"It was rumoured," writes Gilbert, "that Pearce had obtained the plan from Richard Castle, the architect of other elegant buildings, and the author of 'An Essay towards Supplying the City of Dublin with Water,' published in 1735. Pearce was further said to have cheated Castle in the transaction by not paying the amount stipulated for his plans and assistance."

The only definite ground for this rumour appears to be a pseudonymous pamphlet printed for private circulation in 1736, in which Pearce is very bitterly attacked in Latin prose and verse. But the authority of the pamphlet is much disabled by the naïve confession of the writer that Pearce had incurred his enmity by opposing him in a family lawsuit.

There are, however, very caustic comments on the subject in a more modern work, "Ireland: its Scenery and Character," by Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall. "The Bank of Ireland," these authors write, "which was the Parliament House before the Union, is universally classed amongst the most perfect examples of British architecture in the kingdom, yet strange to say little is known of the architect, the history of this graceful and beautiful structure being wrapped in obscurity almost approaching to mystery. We learn only that the Parliament House was begun to be built during the administration of John Lord Carteret in the year 1729, and was executed under the inspection of Captain Edward Lovet Pearce, Engineer and Surveyor-General, but completed by Arthur Dobbs, Esq., in 1729.

"Dr. Walshe, usually so searching in his inquiries, tells us no more in his history of Dublin than Dr. Harris, the historian who preceded him, and who makes mention of Mr. Cassel or Castel, the architect to whom the building is usually attributed but of whom very little is known. Mr. Brewer states, but does not give his authority, that Mr. Cassel did not visit Ireland till 1773, nearly fifty years after the structure was commenced."

"It is a grievous evil that so much apathy should have existed on such a subject that the name of the architect should have been lost in little more than a century and posthumous fame should be denied to one who so nobly earned it. Whoever he was, it is clear that he was content with supplying the

designs and instructions without superintending the work in its progress, some needy man perhaps who, oppressed with poverty, was content to remain in the background and sell both his genius and his glory to the Surveyor-General."

It is perhaps worth noting that the authors spell the name of the reputed architect, whom they are so eager to immortalise, as Cassel or Castel, while the accurate Gilbert writes it Castle. The authors also differ from Gilbert as to dates, somewhat absurdly declaring that the building was begun and completed in 1729.

In truth, there seems little ground for all this vague speculation set afloat by a malicious anonymous pamphlet as to the name of the architect. The official records point plainly to Pearce. There is no doubt he was an architect of considerable reputation, for there is a very complimentary allusion to his skill in Dr. Delaney's poem, " The Lark and the Pheasant." In all the recorded reports and votes of the House of Commons in which he is the recipient of repeated compliments and gratuities, there is not the faintest suggestion of doubt that the entire credit of plans and construction belongs exclusively to him.

Dr. Walshe and Dr. Harris in their histories seem to have accepted this view without hesitation or comment. The subsequent doubt and discussion appear as absurd as the Shakespeare and Bacon controversy. It is high time that the controversy should end and honour be freely given where honour is due.

In 1739 the work, in accordance with the original plans, was carried out by Arthur Dobbs, who succeeded Pearce as Surveyor-General. But the building as it stands to-day was not really completed until long afterwards. The House of Lords desiring, in 1783, some additions and improvements, resolved on erecting a new wing to the building with a convenient entrance in Westmoreland Street. Various architects, consulted by the peers, reported that the work would be attended with serious obstacles on account of the great declivities on the east side which opposed the observance of a due regard to architectural uniformity in preserving continuously the lines of the cornice, blank windows, and rustic basement.

Fortunately, however, they finally appealed to James Gandon, the greatest architect of his age, to whom Dublin is indebted for the Custom House, the Four Courts, and many other public buildings of surpassing beauty. Indeed, the Irish metropolis would be to-day even a more beautiful city than it is if other great designs of Gandon had not been rejected by the Philistinism of his time. The absurd Wellington monument, for example, was preferred to his design for a great triumphal arch at the entrance to Phœnix Park.

Gandon found no difficulty in what other architects declared to be impossible. He proposed a portico on the east side as an entrance to the House of Lords, connected with the south front by a circular ornamental wall, the portico to be of the Corinthian order, the lengthened capital and shaft

of which would, with the aid of one or two steps, meet the obstacle presented by the declivity of the ground. Though the main building is Ionic, Gandon recognised that an Ionic portico on this side would have to be ascended by a considerable number of steps or its grandeur would have been impaired by the incongruous height of the pedestals.

The portico erected in Westmoreland Street is composed of six Corinthian columns surmounted by a handsome pediment, with the circular ornamental wall, as in the plan, carrying round the cornice and rustic basement, but with niches substituted for blind windows.

The purists were not satisfied. The apparent incongruity of erecting a Corinthian portico to an Ionic building excited numerous comments from those unacquainted with the difficulties of the site. It is told that during the erection of the portico a virtuoso inquired of Gandon, who was inspecting the building, to what "order" it belonged. "A very substantial order," Gandon laughingly replied; "the order of the House of Lords."

It was not, however, until 1787 that the Parliament House was completed in the form we know it to-day. The House of Commons not being sufficiently convenient, and the members being also desirous to improve the external appearance of the building, determined to erect considerable additions to the westward of the old structure.

Again Gandon made the plans, which were carried out by Robert Parke. These new erections on portions of the site of Turnstyle Alley, com-

Malton.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

Water-colour over etched outline in the National Gallery of Ireland.

[*Photo W. Lawrence.*

THE IRISH HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.

(Bank of Ireland.)

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menced in August, 1787, comprised an extent of buildings nearly equal to that on the eastern side of the House. The western entrance, under a portico of four Ionic columns, was attached to the old portico by a circular wall as on the opposite side, but with the addition of a circular colonnade of the same order and magnitude as the columns of the portico, twelve feet distant from the wall. This colonnade gives an appearance of extreme grandeur to the building. The inside of this addition comprised many conveniences, including a suite of committee-rooms, rooms for the Sergeant-at-Arms, and a large hall for chairmen to wait with their chairs.

The entire cost of the building from first to last is estimated by Gilbert at £24,000, a very moderate cost, in sharp contrast with the enormous sums this same Parliament lavished on bribery and corruption.

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CHAPTER VII

AN ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECE

Description and panegyric by high authorities—"The grandest of its kind in Europe"—"A simple impulse of Fine Art"—"A high scene of picturesque grandeur"—"Far excells that of Westminster"—The dome too low—Nicknamed the "Goose Pie"—Destroyed by fire—Vivid description by eye-witness—Inartistic restoration—Wanted, an elevated dome.

THERE can be no doubt that the genius of Pearce and Gandon were justified by the result. The two orders of Grecian architecture, the Ionic and the Corinthian, were blended harmoniously in this masterpiece, on which enthusiastic panegyrics have been lavished by the highest authorities. Thomas Malton, an English artist of high distinction, is liberal in his praise.

"The Parliament House of Ireland," he writes, towards the close of the eighteenth century, "is, notwithstanding the several pieces of architecture since raised, the noblest structure Dublin has to boast, and it is no hyperbole to advance that this edifice in its entirety is the grandest, most convenient and extensive of its kind in Europe. The portico is without any of the usual architectural

decorations, having neither statute, vase, bas-relief tablet, sculptured keystone, or sunk panel to enrich it. It derives all its beauty from a simple impulse of Fine Art, and it is one of the finest instances of form alone expressing true symmetry.

"It has been with many the subject of consideration whether it could not have been rendered more pleasing had the dado of the pedestal above the entablature been perforated, but those of the best taste have been decidedly of opinion that it is best as the architect has put it from his hands. This noble structure is situate in College Green and is placed nearly at right angles with the west front of the college. The contiguity of two such structures gives a grandeur of scene that would do honour to the first city of Europe.

"The interior of this admirable building corresponds in every respect with the majesty of its external appearance. The middle door under the portico leads directly into the House of Commons, passing through a great hall called the 'Court of Requests,' where people assemble during the sitting of Parliament, sometimes large deputations with petitions before the House. The Commons' room is truly deserving of admiration. Its form is circular, fifty-five feet in diameter included in a square. The seats whereon the members sit are disposed round the room in concentric circles, one rising above another. About fifteen feet above the level of the floor on a cylindrical basement are disposed sixteen Corinthian columns supporting a rich hemispherical dome which crowns the whole. A narrow gallery for the public, about five feet broad

with very convenient seats, is fitted up with a balustrade in front between the pillars.

"The appearance from the gallery of the House assembled below corresponds with its importance and presents a dignity that must be seen to be felt. The strength of the orators' eloquence receives additional force from the construction of the place and the vibration of the dome.

"All around the Commons' House is a beautiful corridor which communicates by three doors into the House and to all the apartments attendant thereon, which are conveniently disposed about, committee-rooms, rooms for clerks, coffee-rooms, &c.

"The House of Lords is situate to the right of the Commons and is also a noble apartment. The body is forty feet long by thirty feet wide, in addition to which at the upper end is a circular recess thirteen feet deep, like a huge niche wherein the throne is placed under a rich canopy of crimson velvet. The room is ornamented at each end by Corinthian columns with niches between. The entablature of the order goes round the room, which is covered with a rich trunk ceiling. On the two long sides of the room are two large pieces of tapestry; one represents the famous battle of the Boyne and the other the siege of Derry, now (1792) rather decayed.

"Here again," adds Malton, "from below the bar when the House is assembled a high scene of picturesque grandeur is presented, and the Viceroy on his throne appears with more splendour than his Majesty himself on his throne of England."

THE INTERIOR OF THE IRISH HOUSE OF LORDS AT THE PRESENT DAY.

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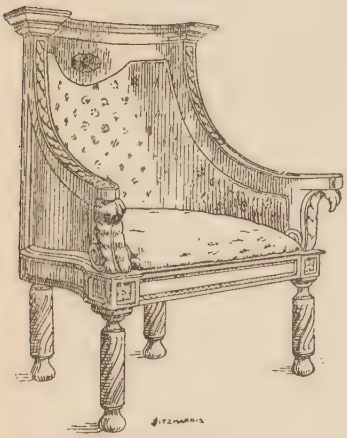
There is a further eulogium which, though briefer, is hardly less enthusiastic in that quaint old book entitled "The Complete Irish Traveller," "containing a general description of the most noted cities, towns, seats, buildings, loughs, &c., in the Kingdom of Ireland, with an elegant copperplate frontispiece representing the proprietors presenting a copy of that work into the hand of Futurity to be preserved from the devastations of Time."

"The Parliament House in College Green," writes the author of the work, "begun in 1729 and finished in ten years at a cost of £24,000, is truly a most august pile and admirably constructed in all its parts. The House of Lords is beautiful and elegant as any public room in Great Britain. The House of Commons is octangular, capacious, convenient, and magnificent, infinitely superior to that of Westminster. The building is looked upon as one of the principal ornaments of the city. The front is a portico of the Ionic order supported by lofty columns of Portland stone and is affirmed to be one of the most perfect pieces of architecture in Europe."

It may be mentioned in passing that when the "Complete Traveller" made his tour of Ireland in 1783 Dublin's population was "nearer to a fourth than a fifth of the population of London."

"The Irish House of Lords," writes the Rev. John Welsely in 1787, "far exceeds that in Westminster, and the Lord-Lieutenant's throne far exceeds the miserable throne (so called) of the King in the English House of Lords. The House of Commons is a noble room indeed. It is oct-

angular in shape, wainscoted round with Irish oak which shames all mahogany, and galleried all round for the convenience of ladies. The Speaker's chair is far more grand than the throne of the Lord-Lieutenant."



THE SPEAKER'S CHAIR IN THE IRISH HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Special pen-and-ink drawing made from the chair in the Dublin Museum by Miss Fitzharris, with special permission of Viscount Masserene.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR'S CHAIR IN THE IRISH HOUSE OF LORDS.

Special pen-and-ink drawing by Miss Fitzharris, by permission of the Royal Irish Academy.

Yet one other description of the building from a little book published January, 1780, "Views of the Most Remarkable Public Buildings and other Edifices in the City of Dublin, delineated by Robert Pool and John Cash."

"This simple pile deserves the greatest praise. It may be happily imitated but it has not yet been exceeded, and is to this day accounted one of the

foremost architectural beauties in the kingdom. The portico in particular is without parallel. It is in the Ionic order, and had it been furnished with a balustrade and proper figures thereon it would have done honour to ancient Rome in the Augustinian age."

"The internal parts have many beauties, and the manner in which the building is lighted has been much admired. The House of Commons is an octogan covered with a dome, which it is to be wished had been raised to a greater height, as it would have added to the magnificence of the building, and at the same time have improved the prospect of the city, but it is so low at present that a person passing by can scarcely perceive it. It is supported by columns of the Ionic order that rise from an amphitheatrical gallery elegantly balustraded with iron, where strangers hear the debates. Upon the whole prejudice itself must acknowledge that the British Empire, we might have added Europe itself, cannot boast so stately and spacious a senatorial hall."

It is right to add that the authors last quoted were not singular in the exception taken to the flatness of the dome, which seems to have been regarded as the one blot in the supreme architectural beauty of the building and earned for it the irreverent nickname of "the goose pie." This dome was, however, destroyed by a fire which broke out at about half-past five in the morning of the 27th of February, 1792, while the House was still sitting.

Gilbert describes the fire as originating from the operations of a man named Nesbit, a "smoke doctor," who had been introduced to the Speaker and recommended to his notice as a prodigy in producing the greatest heat from the least possible fuel, and who was employed to warm the House of Commons by copper tubes run through the building.

There is a vivid description of the conflagration by the Hon. John Edward Walshe, author of "Ireland Sixty Years Ago," who was an eye-witness of the exciting scene.

"On the 27th of February, 1792," he writes, "a group of collegians, of whom I was one, sacrificed our commons and were seated from an early hour in breathless expectation in the gallery of the House."

"Between five and six o'clock, just as the Speaker had taken the chair after prayers, a voice was heard issuing from the roof shouting down 'Fire! Fire!' Smoke was seen rolling down, and in a short time filled the space between the roof and the gallery. An immediate rush was made, and notwithstanding the comparatively small number of persons in the House at that early hour the avenues were nearly choked up. I found myself pinned in the narrow, winding passage between the high partition and the wall with a sense of suffocation coming over me, and it was not till a rush was made along the avenue and I was carried in the current and found myself pushed into the open air that I breathed freely.

"A vast crowd of spectators was gathered outside, and the scene appeared to me unspeakably

grand and awful. The fire had by this time run round the base of the dome and it appeared to raise it up and support it on a column of flame. For a short time it remained thus suspended above its base and as it were hovering in the air, when suddenly the fiery columns seemed to give way and the vast dome sank with a crash within its walls. The circle of the wall was one hundred and seventy-five feet in circumference, and a volume of smoke and flame issued from it as from a crater and exhibited the aspect of a natural volcano. The flames ascended in a cone of fire to a considerable height with a roaring sound, and the vibration seemed to shake the houses in College Green like the accompaniment of an earthquake. After some time the smoke and flame sank within the wall, the torrent of molten lead from the covering of the dome pouring down like a stream of lava. It was the most magnificent imitation of Nature that was ever artificially displayed.

"Among the crowd that filled College Green were seen prominently some of the most violent demagogues of the day. A rumour was spread that the fire was not accidental, but the result of premeditated design to crush at once the members of the House of Commons, take advantage of the confusion that would ensue, and instantly proclaim provisional government independent of England. This sudden conflagration while the House was sitting in secure debate within seemed so like the design and attempt of the 'Gunpowder Plot,' that many yielded readily to the conviction that motives and actors in both were similar and the escape

equally providential. It turned out, however, on a close inspection and examination of the circumstances that the fire was purely accidental. It was caused by the breaking of one of the flues which ran round the walls to heat the House, and by which the fire was communicated to the wood-work supporting the roof. The massive walls of the rotunda protected the other part of the magnificent building, and the damage of the fire was entirely confined to the seeming volcano in the centre. After the fire the business of the House was adjourned to the Speaker's chamber, and the students of Trinity College were particularly favoured with seats at the end of the apartment behind the Speaker's chair.

The House of Commons was by no means improved by the rebuilding necessitated by this fire. The chamber as it now stands is circular in form and covered with a roof in the shape of a "wagon head," surmounting a high brick wall with chimneys. This very curious and unfortunate deviation from the original design was caused by the interference of a member of the House, to whose dictation Mr. Waldré, the architect, felt himself constrained to submit. "If he had refused his consent," writes Gilbert, "it might have been at the risk of his employment." "Had the dome been re-erected and raised to a proper elevation it would," Gilbert adds, "have been the pyramidic completion of the whole building."

It is to be hoped that the old House in College Green, when it is being refitted and made ready for the new Home Rule Parliament, will be crowned with an elevated dome to complete the superb design.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE IRISH PARLIAMENT

Brilliant and imposing—Stately ceremonial—Splendid eloquence—Jovial conviviality—Gross corruption—The Undertakers and Lord Townsend—Bribery, wholesale and retail—Wit of Sir Hercules Langushe—Suppression of the Press—Retort of the ballad-mongers—Swift's satire.

THE Irish House of Parliament was the scene of stately and gorgeous ceremonial. The Viceroy's visits were conducted with all the pomp of royalty, the streets from the Castle to College Green being lined with soldiers on those occasions, while a squadron of cavalry accompanied the cortège, which moved forward in solemn procession amid military music.

On entering the Parliament House the Viceroy went to his robing-room; thence, arrayed in royal robes, he proceeded to the House of Lords attended by two earls bearing the sword and cap of maintenance and three noblemen's sons supporting the train of his robe. After making his congé to the throne the Viceroy ascended and took his seat in the chair of state under the canopy, all the lords, spiritual and temporal, standing robed and uncovered.

The state trials of peers in the House of Lords were conducted with almost oppressive solemnity. In the old chronicles there is an elaborate account of the gorgeous obsequies of that discreditable Viceroy, the Duke of Rutland, who was "waked" in the House of Lords with state and dignity befitting a king.

Nor was the most genial conviviality wanting to the assembly. The Rev. John Welsely, whose appreciation of the House of Commons has been already quoted, thus concludes his panegyric :—

"But what surprised me most of all were the kitchens of the House and the large apparatus for good eating. Tables were placed from one end of a large hall to the other, which, it seems, while Parliament sits, are daily covered with meat at four or five o'clock for the accommodation of the members."

According to Sir Jonah Barrington, financial discussion and conviviality were combined in an extraordinary fashion. "On the day," he writes, "on which the routine business of the Budget was to be opened for promoting supplies the Speaker invited the whole of the members to dinner in the House in his own and the adjoining chambers. Several peers were accustomed to mix in the company, and I believe an equally happy, joyous, and convivial assemblage were never seen together.

"All distinctions as to Government or Opposition parties were totally laid aside. Harmony, wit, wine, and humour reigned triumphant. The Speaker, Clerk, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a very

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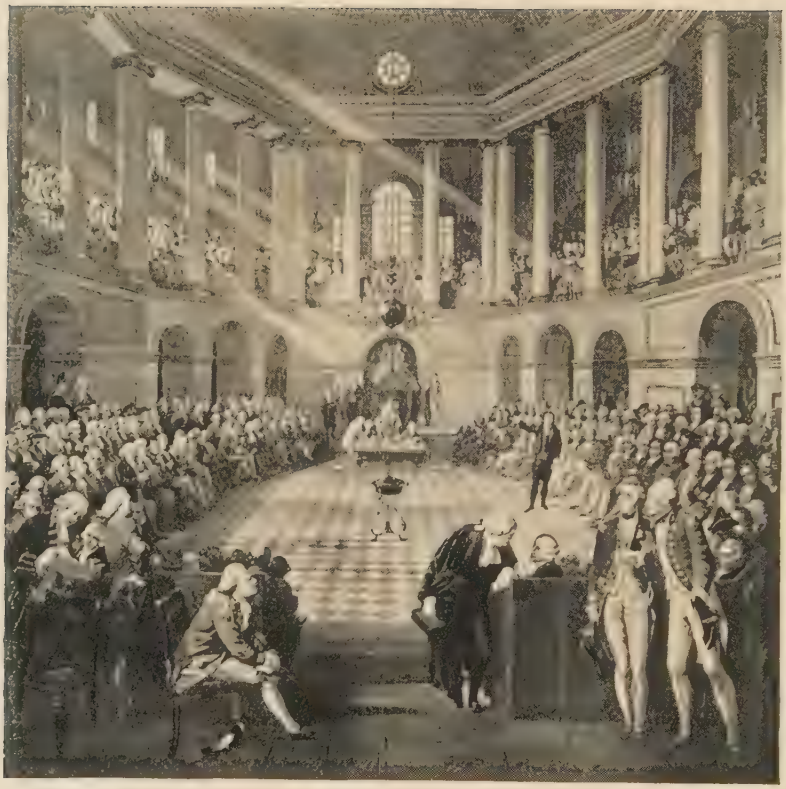

Barraud & Hayter.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

THE INTERIOR OF THE IRISH HOUSE OF COMMONS.

To face p. 79.

few veteran financiers remained in the House until the necessary routine was gone through and then joined their happy comrades, the party seldom breaking up till midnight.

" On the following day the same festivities were repeated. But on the third day, when the Report was brought in and the business discussed in detail, the scene totally changed. The convivialists, now metamorphosed and ranged on the opposite sides of the House, assailed each other without mercy."

The same Sir Jonah Barrington gives a very impressive picture of the debates :—

" In the gallery," he writes, " on every important discussion, nearly seven hundred auditors heard the sentiments and learned the characters of their Irish representatives. The gallery was never cleared for a division. The rising generation acquired a love of eloquence and of liberty, the principles of a just and proud ambition, the details of public business, and the rudiments of constitutional legislation. The front rows of the gallery were generally occupied by families of the highest rank and fashion, whose presence gave an animated and brilliant splendour to the entire scene, and in such a nation as Ireland then was, from which the gallant spirit of chivalry had not been altogether banished, contributed not a little to the preservation of that decorum so indispensable to the dignity of deliberation."

A special privilege was accorded to the students of Trinity College. The interesting book, " Ireland Sixty Years Ago," of which the author has lately been ascertained to be the Hon. John Edward

Walshe, tells of how this privilege was exercised and lost.

" The student's pass was his gown. He rapped at the wicket and the porter looked through a grating. The applicant held out his gown and the door was opened and again closed. This was a privilege often abused. The students' gowns were lent out indiscriminately to friends and acquaintances and the gallery appeared at times half full of gownsmen not half of whom were members of the University. When I first entered College I was very fond of using this privilege. It was a proud thing for a ' Gib ' to present himself to a crowd round the door, hear many cry ' Make way for the gentleman of the College ! ' pass the avenue made for him, find the door expand to the ' Open Sesame ' of his gown and himself admitted alone to the great council of the nation while the suppliant crowd were excluded.

" There was a deep and convenient gallery which was exclusively devoted to gownsmen. They were instantly admitted here on presenting themselves and listened to the debate at their ease, while the public in general now found it difficult to obtain passes, and when they did get admission were confined to a narrow strip of a gallery from which they could neither see nor hear." This proud distinction, however, the gownsmen soon forfeited.

" Lord Fitzwilliam had been sent over as a popular Viceroy, and on his recall a strong feeling of disappointment prevailed. On the night when the subject was to be brought before the House our

gallery was full, and I remember well the irrepressible excitement that seemed to actuate us all. At length it broke out. Grattan rose to deprecate the measure as one calculated to cause the greatest disturbance in Ireland by what was considered the perfidy of the Government first exciting the high hopes of the people by promised measures of liberal policy and then dashing them by the sudden removal of the man who had been sent over expressly to accomplish them. At the conclusion of Grattan's inflammatory speech the enthusiasm in the gallery was no longer capable of restraint. We rose as one man, shouting and cheering with the boisterous tumult of a popular meeting. When this subsided Foster's peculiar voice was heard through his nose ordering the students' gallery to be cleared, and a sergeant-at-arms with a posse of messengers entered amongst us. We were pushed out in a heap without the slightest ceremony and were never again suffered to enter as privileged persons."

But the students neither gained so much nor lost so much as Sir Jonah Barrington's eloquent panegyric of the House of Commons would seem to suggest. His praise is pitched too high. Splendour, conviviality, surpassing eloquence no doubt the House possessed in abundance. But the principles of "liberty and patriotism" were hardly to be gathered from its proceedings, nor were the characters of its members for the most part worthy of emulation or admiration. Irish Catholics, constituting four-fifths of the population, were not

merely excluded from membership of the House, but were forbidden to vote for a member and denied even the poor privilege of attending the proceedings.

The Irish House of Commons with all its splendour and eloquence was, in truth, even after the coming and triumph of Grattan, "a goodly apple rotten at the core," impotent and corrupt. Not merely were four-fifths of the population wholly excluded from membership and franchise, but even the Protestant minority of half a million had no real representation in Parliament.

The House of Commons consisted of three hundred members, and was in the year 1783 constituted as follows :—

32 Counties	returned	Knights	64
7 Cities	„	Citizens	14
University of Dublin	„	Representatives	2
110 Boroughs	„	Burgesses	220

Of which the people returned	81
Of which the patrons returned ...	219
Total ...	300

Two hundred members of the House were chosen by a hundred individuals, and thirty great borough holders controlled a working majority of the house.

Arthur O'Connor averred that when he was in Parliament the traffic of seats was a frequent conversation amongst the members. He heard all round him openly discussed such questions as: "How much had such a one given for his seat?" "From whom did he purchase?" "Has not such

a one sold his borough?" "Has not such a lord bought ——?" "Has not such a peer so many members in this House?" "Was not such a member with the Lord-Lieutenant's secretary to insist on some greater place or pension?" "Did not the secretary refuse it?" "Has he not gone into the Opposition?"

All this occurred, it must be remembered, before the wholesale traffic of the Union.

The House thus constituted was managed in the sole interest of England by a group of three or four powerful leaders who possessed by their own coalition a clear majority on any question that might arise. These personages, who were known as the "Undertakers," regularly stipulated with the Viceroy as to the terms on which they would "carry the King's business through the House" and secure the passing of the votes of supplies.

In return for their services they demanded that the disposal of all Court favours, pensions, and preferments should pass through their hands, to enable them to gratify their subalterns and at the same time keep them in a position of dependence. When the demands of the Undertakers were not complied with, every effort was made to obstruct the business of the Government. The Parliamentary Session was mainly a struggle for power between heads of rival parties, who, during the prolonged absence of the Viceroy, alternately pushed themselves into the office of Lords Justices.

"The power of the Undertakers," writes Lecky,

" was largely, though not exclusively, due to the fact that the Lord-Lieutenant was only resident in the country for six months in two years while Parliament was sitting, and the chief executive power passed in consequence to the Lords Justices, who governed in his absence."

Lord Townsend, however, came as a Viceroy to reside permanently in Ireland in 1767 with the express though secret purpose of breaking down the troublesome power and pretensions of the Undertakers. The popularity which he secured by the passing of an Octennial Parliament Bill, mainly by the efforts of Henry Flood, helped him in his design. His method was simplicity itself. It was merely to suppress the middlemen in corruption and retail his bribes directly from the Castle to the members of the House, who thus became dependent not on the Undertakers but on the Government for their wages. This plan proved successful, but it was even more costly than that which preceded it, and the resources of the country were exhausted to reward the men who betrayed her.

A noted wit, Sir Hercules Langushe, summarised the situation in a sentence. While he was riding in the Park with Lord-Lieutenant Townsend his Excellency complained of his predecessors having left it so damp and marshy. Sir Hercules promptly replied: " Like your Excellency, they were too much employed in draining the rest of the country." Being asked where was the best and truest history of Ireland to be found, he answered at once, " In ' The Continuation of Rapin.' "

It is not surprising that a Parliament so constituted was peculiarly sensitive to the comments of the Press. Any publication reflecting on its proceedings was forthwith ordered to be burned by the common hangman, and the writer, editor, and proprietor sentenced at the Bar of the House to fine and imprisonment.

But the ballad-mongers were not to be silenced. The imprisonment of Sir John Falkiner for an alleged libel was resented in savage verse.

"Better we all were in our graves
Than live in slavery to slaves.
Ye paltry underlings of state,
Ye senators who love to prate,
Ye rascals of inferior note
Who for a dinner sell a vote,
Ye pack of pensionary peers
Whose fingers itch for poets' ears,
Ye bishops, far removed from saints,
Why all this rage? Why these complaints?
. . . . .
Take my advice, to make you safe
I know a shorter way by half.
The cause is plain, remove the cause;
Defend our liberties and laws,
Be sometime to your country true,
Have once the public good in view,
Bravely despise champagne in court
And choose to dine at home on port."

(Not a very high effort of self-sacrifice, one would imagine.)

"Let prelates by their good behaviour
Convince us they believe a Saviour;
Nor sell, what they so dearly bought,
This country, now their own, for naught."

Dean Swift is still more savage in his satire on the House of Commons. A very brief extract from his pungent doggerel may suffice :—

"As I stroll the city oft I
See a building, large and lofty,
Not a bow-shot from the College,
Half the globe from sense and knowledge.
By the prudent architect
Placed against the church direct,
Making good may grandams jest
Near the church : you know the rest.
Tell me what that pile contains,
Many a head that holds no brains.
These demoniacs let me dub
With the name of Legion Club.
Near the door an entrance gapes,
Crowded round with antic shapes,
Poverty, and grief, and care,
Causeless joy and true despair,
Discord, periwigged with snakes,
See the dreadful stride she takes.
In the porch Briareus stands,
Shows a bribe in all his hands."

From all which it would seem that the Parliament of those days was not in high repute with people, patriot, or poet.

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CHAPTER IX

"CABINED, CRIBBED, CONFINED"

Poynings' Law—The fight over Money Bills—The ennoblement of the Earl of Kildare—"Tottenham in his boots"—Occasional victory—Eventual defeat—Patriotic doggerel—The triumph of corruption—English laws binding Ireland—Parliament accepts without protest.

THE Parliament of those days was not merely corrupt, it was also disabled. Administration was wholly outside its function and its powers of legislation reduced to a minimum by British control.

An Act passed as far back as the reign of Henry VII. made the Irish Parliament absolutely dependent on the English. Though the Act was passed in Ireland it would be absurd to describe it as the Act of an Irish Parliament. In 1495 the English Deputy, Sir Edward Poynings, summoned a scratch gathering of his adherents to devise plans for resisting the Yorkish tendencies of the Anglo-Irish colonists. By one provision of the Act passed in this haphazard fashion all laws which previous to this date had been passed in England were made binding on Ireland. By another the independence of all future Parliaments in Ireland was destroyed.

It provided that "all causes and considerations

for calling a Parliament in Ireland and all the Bills which were to be brought forward during its sessions must be previously certified to the King by the Chief Governor and Council of Ireland and affirmed by the King and his Council under the Great Seal of England, and that any proceeding of an Irish Parliament which had not been so certified before the Parliament was assembled should be null and void."

By an Act of Philip and Mary this provision was somewhat modified and the Irish Privy Council was allowed to send over Bills for the approbation of the English Privy Council at a time when the Irish Parliament was actually in session.

By Poynings' Law, even as amended, the Irish Parliament was absolutely precluded from originating any legislative measures, and its sole power was that of accepting or rejecting such measures as were laid before it under sanction of the Great Seal of England.

After a while the custom began for the House of Commons as "humble remembrancers" to frame, not indeed Bills, which would be contrary to Poynings' Law, but heads of Bills, which passed from it to the Irish Privy Council and, if approved, to England. These heads of Bills gradually took the forms of Acts of Parliament with the formula of "We pray that it may be enacted" instead of "Be it enacted."

In accordance with Poynings' Law two or more Bills were always sent over to England as a cause for summoning a new Parliament.

The English Privy Council thus controlled the fate of all Irish legislation. Moreover, if by any chance a popular measure distasteful to England passed through the corrupted House of Commons, very often it was not transmitted to England at all but was "put under the cushion," as the phrase went, by the Irish Privy Council and heard of no more.

But though the right of the English Privy Council to originate, alter, or veto ordinary Bills was generally conceded, the claim to originate or alter a Bill of supply was fiercely opposed. In Ireland, as in England, the point was taken that supply was a voluntary gift of the Commons and belonged exclusively to their province, wholly exempt from foreign suggestion or control.

On the accession of George III. the controversy concerning Money Bills was vigorously renewed. "The Lords Justices," writes Lecky, "on behalf of the Irish Privy Council contended in an able and elaborate representation that the custom of sending over a Money Bill as a cause for summoning Parliament was inexpedient and ought to be abandoned.

"They stated that such a Bill would be surely rejected in Parliament and that in the existing condition of men's minds it would create a ferment at the beginning of the new reign which would be speedily diffused through the whole kingdom. Anthony Malone, then Chancellor of Exchequer, strenuously supported this view, but the great influence of Lord Kildare was thrown into the

opposite scale. The English Privy Council refused to depart from the former precedents and the Irish Lords Justices at once asked to be relieved of their functions. It is remarkable that Pitt in this contest defended the view of the Irish Privy Council."

But there appears to have been no staying power in the Irish House of Commons. After considerable discussion the Lords Justices consented to certify and support the Bill, and it was carried without difficulty through Parliament. The Government marked their victory by dismissing Malone from the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and by bestowing a Marquisate on the Earl of Kildare, who five years later attained the still higher rank of Duke of Leinster.

Only once or twice in such a struggle did the Opposition achieve even a temporary success. One such victory is attended by an exciting incident that deserves to be recorded.

In 1731 a great opposition was set on foot to a proposal that a surplus of £60,000 in the Irish revenue should be made over to the British Government. Charles Tottenham, member for New Ross, hearing that the division was likely to be taken sooner than was expected, at once set out on horseback from his residence in Tottenham Court, Wexford, to Dublin. Dismounting at the entrance of the House of Commons he was stopped by the Sergeant-at-Arms, who reported to the Speaker that a member was attempting to enter the House of Commons without being in the customary full dress. After some hesitation the Speaker decided

that he had no power to exclude him, and the bold rider, in his jack-boots, splashed from head to foot with the mud of sixty miles of Irish roads, strode in and gave a deciding vote against the unpopular measure, which was thrown out by a majority of one.

Thenceforward a popular toast at all patriotic meetings was "Tottenham in his boots." There is a fine picture in the Dublin National Gallery of Tottenham in his boots and spurs on the steps of the Parliament House. But there is no entry of the incident in the journals of the House of Commons, and the Government eventually got hold of the disputed surplus.

On another occasion the patriotic party triumphed by the rejection of a Money Bill, propounded or amended by the Privy Council, and the victory was celebrated in patriotic doggerel :—

"Flood, Langushe, Bushe, Hussy were all in a flame,
Percy, Brownlow, O'Brien, each patriot name
Said the Bill ne'er should pass but go back as it came,
And here we conclude our historical strain.
So God bless His Majesty, long may he reign
To alter our Money Bills, always in vain."

But the final result was invariably and, indeed, inevitably the same. The Privy Council always won in the long run, and rewarded its supporters and punished its opponents at the cost of the State until the Irish Parliament was reduced to a condition of almost absolute docility and impotence.

A still greater usurpation of its authority by the English Parliament was tolerated without protest

by the subservient Parliament of Ireland. It will be observed that even Poynings' Law neither gave nor suggested any authority in the English Parliament to bind Ireland by acts of its own without the approval of the Irish Parliament. The series of navigation laws, to which allusion has been already made, expressly designed by the English Parliament to strangle every form of Irish trade which seemed to threaten competition with England, though clearly beyond its jurisdiction, were, for a long period, tamely accepted in Ireland.

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CHAPTER X

THE PIONEERS OF INDEPENDENCE

Molyneux—A feeble plaint—Political pedantry—The kingdom of Prince John — England's contemptuous reply — Swift — Wood's halfpence — Trade restrictions — Rack-rents — Graziers—Absentees—Lucas's courageous protest—Ingratitude of Irish Parliament.

BUT if there was no official protest from the Irish Parliament against English usurpation public feeling outside at length began to make itself heard.

The first protest in point of time was led by Mr. William Molyneux, who published a little book, already mentioned, "The Case of Ireland being bound by Act of Parliament in England Stated," which created the utmost excitement at the date of its publication, and raised the author to instant popularity in Ireland.

Reading it at the present time it is hard to understand the sensation evoked by the book.

Molyneux was a friend and associate of Locke, and the book is written with a curious affectation of logical precision applied to such an unpromising subject as the rights of a conqueror over the lives, property, and posterity of the conquered. The

book, moreover, is disfigured by that political pedantry which was one of the vices of the age, and from which, as will be seen later on, even such great minds as Grattan's and Flood's were unfortunately not exempt.

Protest is too strong a word to apply to the language of Molyneux, it is rather a complaint couched in terms of the utmost humility against the claim of England to legislate for Ireland.

The book opens with a fulsome eulogy of William III., whose Act, passed with his pronounced personal approval, for the suppression of the woollen trade was one of the main causes of the misery of the country. This benefactor of Ireland is assured by Molyneux that " your kingdom of Ireland from the depths of despair is raised by your majesty to a prosperous and flourishing condition." A pretty strong opening statement this, in a book whose main purpose was to complain that the legislation of King William's Parliament had reduced the country to a condition of abject impoverishment.

In his opening address to the reader Molyneux shows himself, not unnaturally, nervous as to the spirit in which his complaint, however mildly worded, will be received in England.

" I have heard it has been said," he writes, " that I might run some hazard in attempting this argument, but I am not at all apprehensive of any such danger. We are in a miserable condition indeed if we may not be allowed to complain when we think we are hurt and give our reasons with

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all modesty and submission." Finally, in his introduction he makes humble submission to the English Parliament of whose usurpation he is supposed to complain.

"If," he concludes, "what I offer herein seems to carry any weight in regard to my own poor country I shall be abundantly happy in the attempt, but if after all the Great Council of England resolve the contrary I shall then believe myself to be in error and with the lowest submission ask pardon for my assurance."

It is not necessary or useful to enter with any detail into his elaborate argument in which he discusses, first, whether Ireland was ever conquered, and secondly, assuming a conquest, what rights were thereby acquired by the conquerors, and finally how far those rights were modified by subsequent concessions. The following specimens of his arguments may, however, be found interesting.

"All that gives title in a just conquest is the opposer using brutal force and quitting the law of reason and using the law of violence, whereby the conqueror is entitled to use him as a beast, that is, kill him," which is rather hard on the defenders of their country against invasion.

He then proceeds to argue that even the just conqueror, though he is absolute over the lives and liberties of the opposers, has no right at all over their property or over their posterity who took no part in the opposition.

It is to be observed that Molyneux does not take

exception to the crippling of Irish legislation by Poynings' Law. On the contrary, he uses it as an argument to prove that it was only by the authority of an Irish Parliament—save the mark—that English statutes could apply to Ireland.

But the quaintest argument of all is his sober contention that Ireland was constituted a separate kingdom by the fact that Henry II. passed it on as a free gift to his son Prince John. On this argument the writer lays special stress and elaborates it in many pages.

"About the twenty-third year of Henry II.," he writes, "which was within five years after his return from Ireland, he created his younger son King of Ireland at a Parliament held at Oxford. Soon after, King John, being then twelve years, came into Ireland from Milford to Waterford as his father had formerly done. The Irish nobility and gentry immediately repaired to him, but being received by him and his retinue with some scorn and derision by reason of their long, rude beards, they took such offence thereat that they departed with much discontent, which was the occasion of the young king staying so short a time in Ireland."

The author contends that by "this donation of the kingdom of Ireland to King John, Ireland was most eminently set apart as a separate and distinct kingdom from the kingdom of England."

This mildly written book, with its quaint arguments and modest claims, created a ferment of indignation in England. It was condemned by the British Parliament and directed to be burned by

the common hangman. The only apparent practical result was the passing of an English Act which expressly declared the powers of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland and asserted an appellate jurisdiction in England over the Irish Courts of Law.

Swift's comment on Molyneux was characterised by his customary shrewd common-sense. "The arguments," he wrote, "were invincible, for, in reason, all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery. But in fact eleven men well armoured will certainly subdue one man in a shirt."

It never appears to have occurred to Swift to apply his own "very definition of slavery" to the great Catholic majority, who most assuredly were not governed by their own consent. Indeed, neither he, nor Molyneux, nor Lucas, nor any one of the reforming patriots for one moment dreamt of any relief for the Catholics. The word liberty had no reference to them. It is specially plain from all the writings of Swift that he regarded the Catholics in much the same spirit in which his own Gulliver regarded the Yahoos, creatures outside the pale of law or humanity.

Swift, nevertheless, was the chief pioneer in the work of Ireland's liberation. In that struggle he played the part which Voltaire played in the French Revolution. Protesting against the treatment meted out to Molyneux, he declared "Those who have used to curb liberty have gone so far as to resent the liberty of complaining, though a

man upon the rack was never known to be refused the liberty of roaring as loud as ever he thought fit."

Swift's own voice, however, was not to be stifled. He wrote with a trenchant and power to which Molyneux could lay no claim. His Drapier Letters were certainly an astounding performance. Writing in the character of an Irish Protestant tradesman of small means, he made a series of violent protests against a royal patent to a man named Woods to coin halfpence to the amount of forty thousand pounds for circulation in Ireland.

Surely never in history was a commotion so great and far-reaching evoked from an incident so innocent and so unimportant. Ireland was confessedly in need of additional copper coinage, and the metal of Wood's halfpence appears on the high authority of Sir Isaac Newton, then Master of the Mint, to be fully up to the required standard. But the quality of the metal was wholly beside the question. A copper coin is, of course (unlike a gold one), no more than a token, and its face value has no relation to the metal of which it is made. The Dean might almost as well have raised an outcry against the quality of the paper on which bank-notes were printed.

Nor did the controversy logically touch in any way the burning question of England's right to make laws binding on Ireland, for the Mint was admitted on all hands to be within the prerogative of the Crown. The natural conclusion is that the Dean was on the look-out for an opportunity

of attacking the Government and found in Wood's halfpence, the peg on which to hang a denunciation of oppression and extortion to which the country was subjected. The least result of the famous letters was the suppression of the obnoxious coins. The controversy roused and united the Irish people and created a spirit of revolt which only waited the opportunity to make itself felt in a more momentous issue.

Through the Drapier Letters and through the other tracts and pamphlets of Swift's on Irish topics there breathes a fierce spirit of indignation against the oppression and extortion to which a poverty-stricken country was subjected. He is in violent protest against the injustice of the navigation laws, which strangled Irish manufacture, and against absentee landlords and highly salaried officials who plundered the country to spend their booty in England.

Many of his strictures and suggestions have retained their force even to the present day. In a strong article in favour of universal use of Irish manufacture he quotes with special approval a saying of the late Archbishop of Tuam, now commonly attributed to himself, " Ireland will never be happy until a law is made for the burning of everything that comes from England except their coal."

The suppression of the woollen trade he denounces by a parable. " The fable in Ovid of Arachne and Pallas," he writes, " is to the purpose. The goddess had heard of Arachne, a young virgin

very famous for spinning. They both met on a trial of skill, and Pallas, finding herself equalled in her own art, stung with rage, knocked her rival down and turned her into a spider, enjoining her to spin and weave for ever out of her own bowels and in a very narrow compass. I confess I always pitied poor Arachne and could never heartily love the goddess on account of so cruel and unjust a sentence, which, however, is fully executed on us by England with further additions of vigour and severity, for the greater part of our bowels and vitals is extracted without allowing us the liberty of weaving and spinning them."

It is interesting now, at the close of a long agrarian struggle, to find rack-renting denounced as vigorously by Swift as it ever was by the Land League.

"Another great calamity," he writes, "is the exorbitant raising of the rents. Farmers are screwed up to a rack-rent, short leases granted, tenants tied down to hard conditions and discouraged from cultivating the lands they occupy to the best advantage by the certainty they have of the rent being raised on the expiration of the lease proportionate to the improvements they have made. Thus it is that honest industry is restrained and the farmer is the slave of his landlord."

In Swift, too, we find the earliest outcry against graziers. "This, I say, is something so sottish that it wants a name in our language to express it. The more sheep we have the fewer human creatures there are to wear the wool or eat the

flesh. Ajax was mad when he mistook a flock of sheep for his enemies, but we shall never be sober until we have the same way of thinking."

Swift rails against the exhausting drain of Ireland's resources into England. "One-third of the rents of Ireland is spent in England, which, with the profit of the employments, pensions, appeals, journeys of pleasure, education at the Inns of Court and both Universities, remittances at pleasure, the pay of all superior officers in the army, and other instances, will amount to a full half of the income of the whole country. Besides," he adds, "the prodigious profit which England thus receives she has another mighty advantage by making our country a receptacle wherein to disburden herself of supernumerary pretenders to office, persons of second-rate merit in their own country, who, like birds of passage most of them, thrive and fatten here and then fly off when their credit and employment are at an end. So that Ireland may justly say what Luther said of himself, 'Poor Ireland maketh many rich.'"

Swift constantly expresses his wonder how "a man of birth and spirit could endure to be wholly insignificant and obscure in a foreign country when he might live with lustre in his own and even at less than half that expense which he strains himself to make without attaining any one end except that which happens to the frog when he would contend with size with the ox." Even to this day the satire is appropriate to Irish absentees.

Lucas was the third of the protesting patriots.

With far less ability than Swift but with far more vigour and courage than Molyneux, he denied the claim of England to make laws for Ireland and, unlike Molyneux, denounced Poynings' Law as vigorously as the modern usurpation.

"The imposition of laws made in a strange and foreign Parliament, without their consent or knowledge," Lucas declared, "placed the Protestant Irish under a more severe bondage than the Israelites suffered in Egypt." He called upon his fellow-citizens to demand a repeal of the unjust and oppressive statutes, assuring them that they "could not consistently with their duty to their God, their King, their country, and themselves relinquish their claim to their birthright—Liberty."

Of course, emancipation of Catholics was no part of his programme. They were an inferior race in his regard. He was at one with the South American politician who declared that "Liberty's a sort of thing that don't agree with niggers."

This courageous reformer, however, got little gratitude from the Protestant Parliament, whose claims he so strenuously advocated. Indeed, no more striking illustration can be found of the degraded condition to which that Parliament was reduced than its treatment of Lucas and his works. The House whose privilege he championed directed his book to be burned by the common hangman and commanded him to answer at the Bar the charge of breach of privilege. A prosecution was threatened and he fled to England, "to avoid," as Lecky tells us, "imminent imprisonment."

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CHAPTER XI

GRATTAN AND THE VOLUNTEERS

Henry Grattan: his character—Incidents of his early life—Instant distinction in Parliament—Vain crusade against corruption and extravagance—The Volunteers—Danger of an Irish invasion—Impotence of English Government, "not a regiment available"—Miraculous spread of the Volunteer movement—General boycott of British manufacture—Influence on Parliament—Grattan ready—The hour and the man.

THE Parliament which Henry Grattan entered in 1785 as a nominee of Earl Charlemont for a pocket borough was equally distinguished for its brilliancy and its corruption. It contained many eloquent orators but few patriots, and it was too much engaged in the persecution of the Catholic majority to effectively resent the usurpation and extortion of England. Personal aggrandisement was the motive power alike with leaders and followers. While the country was plunged in abject misery the members of Parliament maintained themselves in splendour at the cost of the country.

It is curious to find that the most bitter opponent of Dr. Lucas was Henry Grattan's father, then Recorder of Dublin and one of the members for

the city. The son's ardent sympathy with Lucas caused at first a coldness and at last a complete estrangement between them.

There is an amusing story told of Grattan's quarrel with Dr. Duigan, one of the most bitter persecutors of the Catholics and at the same time one of the most subservient partisans of the Government. Dr. Duigan, meeting young Grattan for the first time at the "Grecian," one of the most fashionable resorts in Dublin, and knowing the father's view thought to please the son by vituperation of Dr. Lucas. But young Grattan, to Duigan's surprise, espoused the cause of the popular champion with great warmth. High words ensued and one of Grattan's friends, fearful of a quarrel on the spot, managed to get them apart. In the evening, however, Grattan again repaired to the coffee-house with a long sword at his side. Duigan, however, did not appear, but contented himself with writing a comic poem describing Grattan's droll appearance.

In his early life Grattan was undoubtedly affected with the mannerisms and pedantry of the age in which he lived. He considered it often the correct thing that "young gentlemen would be as sad as night only for wantonness." He loved poetry and oratory. Pope was his favourite poet and Lord Chatham his great exemplar in oratory. Pope spoiled him as a poet and Chatham made him the greatest orator of his age. But all through his life the spirit of poetry brightened and coloured his eloquence. From an early date he resolved on a

House of Commons career and acquired the habit, which lasted late into his life, of declaiming his speeches for his own satisfaction regardless of his surroundings.

His landlady, while he was a law student in London, wrote to his friends requesting that he might be removed as he was always pacing her garden talking to some invisible person whom he called Mr. Speaker, and she believed that he must be out of his mind.

Judge Day used to tell a story of Grattan having in one of his midnight rambles in Windsor forest stopped before a gibbet, which he apostrophised in his customary vigorous fashion, when a ranger came up behind him and clapped his hand on his shoulder with the startling inquiry, " How the devil did you get down? "

From the first Grattan made his power felt in the Irish Parliament. Two months before he entered Flood had taken office and the leadership of the popular party soon passed into the hands of this young recruit to the patriot ranks. There is warm contemporary praise of his earlier speeches, of which, unhappily, no record remains.

The first speech of which any report is extant was made on a motion for retrenchment of the Government expenses, it was warmly praised by Fox, who met him subsequently at Lord Moira's, and the incident proved the beginning of a lifelong friendship between the two great orators.

At this period the misery of the country and the extravagance of the administration were both extreme.

On more than one occasion the Government had to borrow sums of £20,000 from La Touche's Bank in order to pay the necessary, or unnecessary, expenses of the State, and on one occasion at least the loan was refused on the ground that the security was insufficient. But any attempt to curtail expenses was sternly resisted. Sinecure posts, with fat salaries attached, were jobbed away to absentees. To take a single example. A salary of a sinecure officer with the curious name of "Clerk of the Pells" was increased from £2,000 to £3,500 a year, and the position was then conferred on Mr. Jenkinson, English Secretary of War. The pension list reached close on £100,000 a year, and, as Grattan pointed out, had in a single day been increased by £24,000.

"The known prodigality of his Majesty's ministers in Ireland," Grattan said, "had taught immodesty to its officers, and where everything was a job every one would be a claimant. The service of the Crown had meantime sunk and its dignity vanished. Ministers had taken the jewels out of the crown and staked them against the liberties of the people. Between the average revenue and the average expenditure there was a deficit of £273,700. Such a state of affairs explained itself and constituted argument for retrenchment."

The motion for retrenchment was rejected by an overwhelming majority, but the condition of the country grew so appalling that Grattan three days later reverted to the subject, and the majority against him was greater than before.

Meanwhile, however, a new and tremendous force was rapidly coming into play. England's military power was reduced to its lowest ebb at the close of the disastrous war with America. The Irish coast was threatened with invasion and the Government had neither money nor men to oppose the invader. Belfast, through its "sovereign" appealing to the Lord-Lieutenant for protection, was told that "it was not in the power of the Government to furnish a single regiment." Later on Richard Hernon, Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant, wrote to warn the "sovereign" of Belfast against privateers threatening the northern coast and added: "His Excellency can at present send no further military aid to Belfast than a troop or two of horse or part of a company of invalids."

Under those circumstances the country, beginning with Belfast, resolved to make ready for its own defences. Such was the origin of the Irish Volunteers, an almost miraculous achievement of patriotic energy. Suddenly in the midst of this poverty-stricken people there sprang up a splendid national army, uniformed, disciplined, effective, organised by no other impetus and dependent on no other support than the patriotism of the people. The enthusiasm spread like wildfire from Ulster over the other three provinces till the entire country was enrolled.

The enrolment was at first restricted to Protestants. The enslaved Catholics were forbidden to bear arms and were excluded from the ranks of the Volunteers. They had, indeed, little hope

from the movement : foreign invasion might improve their position, it could not make it worse than it was. But somehow they caught the contagion of patriotic enthusiasm and freely contributed from their poverty to the military organisation from which they were excluded by their faith.

It is doubtful whether the leaders of the Volunteers saw at first in this great armed national organisation anything more than a security against the temporary danger of invasion, whether they even dimly recognised the creation of an irresistible agent of a great national revolution. But it is certain that the corrupt Government feared it from the first. "Willing to wound and yet afraid to strike," they openly approved while they secretly endeavoured to undermine the organisation.

Lord Weymouth, Home Secretary for England, wrote to Lord-Lieutenant Buckingham that "the Volunteers should be discouraged by all gentle and proper means," and Buckingham responded, "Discouragement has been given on my part as far as might be without offence at a time when the arm and goodwill of every man might be wanting for the protection of the State," for whose protection, it is to be remembered, the pauper Government could not afford a single regiment.

Even as late as May, 1779, the Lord-Lieutenant discussed, though only to dismiss the idea of seizing the arms of the Volunteers and by military force preventing them assembling. "Seizing their arms," he writes, "would be a violent experiment, and to prevent their assembling without a military force, impossible."

The power of the Volunteers grew so rapidly that the trembling Government speedily lost all hope of discouragement or control, and were even compelled to distribute amongst the national troops many stands of arms originally intended for the militia. The Duke of Leinster was appointed commander of the Dublin forces and Lord Charlemont commander-in-chief. It is estimated that in the prime of its power the national army of Volunteers numbered at least 100,000 disciplined men, fully armed, equipped with artillery, and officered by the most distinguished men in the country.

The Volunteers from the first applied themselves to the furtherance of the national prosperity of Ireland and later to the assertion of the national demand for independence. All their uniforms and equipments were of Irish manufacture, and they strongly discouraged the importation of any manufactured articles from England. This spirit was quickly caught up by the people. What in later days would be called "boycotting" resolutions were passed by the most important representative bodies. At a general meeting held in the Tholsel of Dublin, of the freemen and freeholders of the city, presided over by the sheriffs William James and John Exshaw, it was unanimously resolved "that we will not from the date hereof until the grievances of the country shall be removed directly or indirectly import or consume any of the manufactures of Great Britain, nor shall we deal with any merchant or shopkeeper who shall import such

manufacture, and that we recommend the adoption of a similar agreement to the rest of Ireland."

Similar resolutions were passed everywhere and almost universally obeyed, to the great improvement of the trade and commerce of the country and the consternation of the Government. The influence of the Volunteers made itself felt even in a Parliament armour-plated with corruption but resident in Ireland, and therefore not wholly immune to Irish public opinion. Grattan was there ready and eager to take advantage of the waking spirit of patriotism. "The hour had come and the man."

CHAPTER XII

FREE TRADE

Grattan carries Free Trade in the Irish House of Commons—Evasion by the Government—Menace of the Volunteers—Assembly in College Green—Statue of William III., its triumphs and vicissitudes—The cannon of the Volunteers—"Free Trade or ——"—Grattan's perseverance—No new taxes—Short Appropriation Bill—Effect in England—Irish Free Trade granted by the English House of Commons.

GRATTAN seized his opportunity when it came. He assembled the leaders of the Opposition at Bray, then a small seaside village, and in concert with them resolved on the reopening of Parliament to resolutely press upon the Government the abolition of all restrictions on Irish trade.

The Address from the throne was vague and unsatisfactory. It directed attention to the extraordinary decline in the revenue but suggested no remedy. Grattan, in a speech declared to be one of wonderful power but of which no adequate report remains, denounced the Address as an insult to the nation.

"The poverty of the people," he said, "resulted from commercial restrictions which plunged the nation into hopeless calamity. Every concession

had been made to the monopolising spirit of insignificant little English towns at the expense of Irish trade, while the faithful though oppressed people of Ireland were made the victims of ingratitude and tyranny. The bankruptcy of the State was the natural consequence of a system of boundless prodigality, profligacy, and violence." He ended by moving a resolution of free export for Ireland.

When Grattan had previously moved much milder resolutions he had been scoffed at by the Government and defeated by overwhelming majorities in the House. But the menace of the Volunteers was in the air and the Government did not now dare to oppose.

Prime Sergeant Hussy Burgh, a member of the Government but at the same time one of the most honest and most eloquent men in the House of Commons, rose to support and supplement the motion. He moved as an amendment that the words should be enlarged to "free export and import." Flood moved as a further amendment they should simply be "Free Trade," and in this form the motion was unanimously carried.

It is hardly necessary to observe that the phrase "Free Trade" had not the meaning then it afterwards acquired in the campaign of Cobden and Bright, of a remission of tariffs. "Free Trade" meant for Ireland free export and import and repeal of the penal British legislation which hampered or extinguished Irish commerce in the interest of commercial rivals in England.

The result was received with uproarious joy in the metropolis. When the Speaker carried up the amended Address to the Lord-Lieutenant the streets from Parliament House to the Castle were lined with Volunteers under the command of the Duke of Leinster, and behind the ordered lines were a vast crowd of cheering citizens.

Next day votes of thanks were passed in both Houses of Parliament to the Volunteers for their spirited and necessary services to their country.

But the battle was not yet won. The answer of the King to the Address, expressing his concern for the distresses in Ireland and his affectionate readiness to concur in such measures as should upon mature consideration appear most productive to the general welfare, was studiously vague. It might mean anything and did mean nothing.

The 4th of November following, the birthday of King William, was selected for a great Free Trade demonstration round his statue in College Green.

The date and place fixed for this demonstration seem somewhat incongruous. The cruellest and meanest blow dealt to Irish manufacture and commerce was dealt by William III., of glorious and immortal memory, when his Parliament, with the warm personal approval of the monarch, strangled the Irish woollen trade by penal legislation.

The strange statue of William III. in College Green had since its erection on the 1st of July, 1701, witnessed a series of extraordinary vicissi-

tudes. On the night of a Sunday, the 25th of June, early in the century, some persons covered the King's face with mud and deprived him of his truncheon. On the following Monday the House of Lords resolved that the Lord Chancellor as Speaker " do as from this House attend his Excellency and acquaint him that great indignities were offered last night to the statue of the late King William of glorious memory." A reward of £100 was offered, and the " villains " were discovered to be three students of Trinity College named Graffon, Venicome, and Harvey, who were forthwith condemned to six months' imprisonment, fined £100 each, and were ordered to be carried on the 19th of November at eleven o'clock " to College Green and there to stand for half an hour before the statue, each with this inscription on his breast: 'I stand here for defacing the statue of our glorious deliverer the late King William.' "

But this severe sentence did not prove a detriment, for again on the 11th of October, 1714, " some profligate persons did in the night-time offer great indignities to the memory of King William by taking and breaking the truncheon of his statue." On this occasion the " profligates " were not discovered.

Again and again attacks on the unfortunate statue were repeated. Its sword was stolen, its neck was nearly filed through. It was badly blown up and found lying ignobly on its back with one leg off close to the College railings. But the most humorous mishap which it encountered was a few years after the Union.

Great celebrations were on foot for the celebration of the birthday of the King. But the night before at twelve o'clock the watchman who was on guard beside the statue was accosted by a painter, who informed him he was sent by the city decorator to prepare it for the approaching ceremony, adding that the hostility of the people made it advisable to do the work at night. The good-natured watchman assisted him to raise and adjust his ladder, and the painter worked away vigorously almost until dawn.

When at last he departed for some further material to complete the decorations, promising to return in a short time, he left the sympathetic watchman in charge of his ladders. But he never returned, and the day of the celebration found the unfortunate statue smeared all over with a mixture of tar and grease impossible to remove and the empty paint-pot suspended by a halter round the neck of the King. In the words of a popular ballad sung through the streets—

"Faith, the whole River Boyne wouldn't clean him."

The statue continued to be the bone of contention for rival factions until a score of years ago, when it was handsomely renovated by the Dublin National Corporation; since then it no longer seems to excite the enthusiasm of the Orangemen.

It is not easy to understand why the Volunteers selected the statue for the centre of the Free Trade demonstration. But whatever may be thought of

the date or scene of the demonstration, there was no mistaking the menacing determination of the Volunteers. Horse, foot, and artillery fully armed, with banners flying, paraded round the monument amid the cheers of the people. The statue itself was hung with the significant inscriptions : " Relief to Ireland ! " " The Volunteers of Ireland, *quinquaginta millia parata pro patria mori*," while on the cannon planted in front of the monument was inscribed the curt threat, " Free Trade or ——"

A vivid description of this exciting scene was given in the *Freeman's Journal* of November 6, 1779.

" The appearance in College Green on Thursday last of our constitutional forces, the Volunteer companies, produced a scene of satisfaction unknown before in this country. The accustomed annual procession round the statue of William III. by mercenaries equally ready at the word of command for that or the perpetration of any deed was ill calculated to convey to the minds of the enthusiasts of liberty a pleasing recollection of the constitutional blessings derived from the ' glorious revolution.' On Thursday last the scene was changed. A body of a thousand citizens, men of various professions, ranks, and fortunes, appeared under arms, perfectly disciplined and appointed in all respects. They formed a square enclosing the statue and the cavalry paraded and defended the infantry from annoyance.

" In front were two field-pieces with this inscription on each, ' A Free Trade or this.'

" The statue was repainted and decorated with orange ribbons, &c.

" On the four compartments of the pedestal were four inscriptions which, beginning at the south side and ending at the west, read thus :—

" ' Relief for Ireland ! '

" ' Fifty thousand Volunteers ready to die for their country.'

" ' A Short Money Bill, a Free Trade or else——'

" ' The Glorious Revolution.'

" The respect and veneration which appeared in the mob on this occasion was conspicuous. They yielded with unusual condescension and temperance to every arrangement. A smile of congenial affection appeared on the countenance of the people, and when after the third volley of fire, which was distinguishedly accurate, the Duke of Leinster flung up his hat in a ' Huzza ! ' there was not a covered head in the multitude. The cheers resounded from street to street through the whole city, gathering strength in their progress. In the evening, a thing never done before on the 4th of November, the whole city was illuminated and it was observable that all distinctions of religion and prejudice were suspended. The night concluded as the day began, innocently and auspiciously and singularly marking the calendar of Ireland."

A few days later the population of Dublin took fire. A vast crowd of various tradesmen, dyers and tanners from the liberties, and butchers from Ormond Quay joined their forces for once, attacked the house of the Attorney-General, stopped the

Speaker and other members of Parliament on their way to the House, and made them swear they would vote for the good of Ireland and Free Trade.

The military were called out, but the people refused to disperse, and it was only by the friendly pressure of the Volunteers they were induced to return to their homes.

The Government offered a reward for the ringleaders, but the ringleaders were not forthcoming, and the Lord-Lieutenant complained that the Lord Mayor had been very remiss in repressing the disturbance.

Grattan strongly deprecated the riot. "I would not wish," he said, "one single spark of public fire to be wasted by any unavailing act of violence or tumult which might disgust the moderate and terrify the timid. By calmly persisting in your humble and just desires you will advocate in their support all ranks of Irishmen." Meanwhile he prosecuted the struggle in the House of Commons with unflinching zeal and determination.

A fortnight later he carried by an overwhelming majority, one hundred and seventy to seventy-four, a resolution that "at this time it would be inexpedient to grant new taxes." Next day, when the House had resolved itself into a committee of supply, he secured a fresh victory by carrying a resolution that the appropriated duties should be granted for six months only.

It was on this occasion that the Prime Sergeant, Hussy Burgh, breaking once for all from the Government, electrified the House by a burst of

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[*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

COMMEMORATIVE TRAY OF IRISH VOLUNTEERS

In the author's possession, representing a Volunteer mounting Hibernia with a scroll with the inscription "A Free Trade obtained for the people of Ireland in the year 1780."

surpassing eloquence. "Talk not to me of peace," he cried at the conclusion of a fiery speech. "Ireland is not in a state of peace: it is smothered war. England has sown her laws like dragons' teeth and they have sprang up in armed men."

Never did even Grattan himself arouse the House to such a pitch of ungovernable enthusiasm. The applause was caught up from the floor of the House to the galleries, and from the galleries it was echoed to the doors and broke out again and again in deafening tumult from the great crowds assembled in College Green.

The Government was silenced, the victory won. That famous sentence cost Hussy Burgh his high position. He was dismissed by the Government. But it is remembered to-day with admiration whenever his name is mentioned and with regret that such scant record of his eloquence remains. As Grattan finely said, "The gates of promotion shut upon him as those of glory opened."

The non-importation compacts in the country, the unanimous vote of the Irish House of Commons, the short Money Bill, but above all the unmistakable menace of the Volunteers, had effect upon the English people and Government. It was plain that delay was dangerous and resistance impossible. Almost at once Lord North introduced a Bill in the English Parliament "to allow Ireland Free Trade in wool, woollens, glass, leather, and all other forms of manufacture to all the ports of the British colonies and plantations hitherto closed to her commerce." The Bill passed practically in the

form in which it was introduced. So perished at once the whole complicated system of commercial restriction which began under Charles II. and reached the climax of crushing severity under William III.

The Government, not unnaturally perhaps, endeavoured to claim credit for this enforced and tardy concession of justice. The Bill was printed and circulated at the public expense everywhere throughout the country and there was general illumination in Dublin. But the Irish people realised that the measure was the offspring of fear, not justice, and their gratitude was given to Grattan and the Volunteers.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Free Trade demands a free Parliament—Grattan opens the campaign—Resolutions—The first repulse—Revolt against the British Parliament—The Mutiny Bill—Singular advertisement—Grattan's address to the nation—Appeal to the Volunteers—A comical reply.

GRATTAN'S triumph though great was incomplete. So long as England maintained the right to legislate for Ireland it was in her power to devise new restrictions on Irish trade or revive the old, and it was speedily made plain that England had no intention of abandoning her advantage.

The leader and people were alike convinced that the independence of the Irish Parliament was the only security for the permanence of the concessions already gained. Their appetite had been whetted by the first taste of freedom. Grattan, in defiance of almost all the patriots by whom he was commonly supported, declared on the bold stroke of a declaration of Parliamentary Independence. His determination excited consternation alike among sagacious enemies and foolish friends. It

was feared by the timid that the commercial advantages already secured might be forfeited in the new attempt. Every effort was made to deter him from his purpose. Even that good friend of Ireland, Edmund Burke, affected by the prevailing panic, wrote to an Irish friend: "Will no one stop that madman Grattan?"

But Grattan's determination was not to be shaken by persuasion or threat. On the 19th of April, 1790, he for the first time moved in the Irish House of Commons a declaration of Irish rights. "That the King's most excellent Majesty and the Lords and Commons of Ireland are the only power to make laws for Ireland." His speech on that occasion he himself regarded to be the greatest he ever delivered. No extracts can do justice to its surpassing eloquence.

"What," he demanded of a spellbound Parliament, "are you, with three million of men at your back, with charters in one hand and arms in the other, afraid to say you are a free people? Are you, the greatest House of Commons that ever sat in Ireland, that want but this one act to equal the English House of Commons that passed the Petition of Right or that other that passed the Declaration of Right, are you afraid to tell the British Parliament you are a free people? Are the cities and the instructing counties, who have breathed a spirit that would have done honour to old Rome when Rome did honour to mankind, are they to be free by connivance? Are the military associations,

those bodies whose origin, progress, and deportment have transcended, equalled at least anything in modern or ancient story, are they to be free by connivance? . . .

"There is nothing in the way of your liberty except your own corruption and pusillanimity; and nothing can prevent your being free but yourselves. It is not in the disposition of England; it is not in the interest of England, it is not in her arms to oppose you. Will Great Britain, a wise and magnanimous country thus tutored by experience and wasted by war, the French Navy riding her Channel, send an army to Ireland to levy no tax, to enforce no law, to answer no end whatsoever except to violate the charters of Ireland and enforce a barren oppression? What! Has England lost thirteen provinces? has she reconciled herself to their loss? and will she not be reconciled to the liberty of Ireland? . . .

"I shall hear of ingratitude: I name the argument to despise it and the men who make use of it: I know the men who use it are not grateful, they are insatiate; they are public extortioners who would stop the tide of prosperity and turn it into the channel of their own emolument. I know of no species of gratitude which should prevent my country from being free, no gratitude which would oblige Ireland to be the slave of England. In cases of robbery and usurption nothing is an object of gratitude except the thing stolen, the charter spoliated. A nation's liberty, like her treasures, cannot be meted and parcelled out. Ingratitude!

No man can be grateful or liberal of his conscience, nor woman of her honour, nor nation of her liberty.

"There are certain unimpartable, inherent, invaluable properties not to be alienated from the person, whether body politic or body natural. With that same contempt do I treat that charge which says that Ireland is insatiable; seeing that Ireland asks nothing but that which Great Britain has robbed her of—her rights and privileges. To say that Ireland will not be satisfied with liberty because she is not satisfied with slavery is folly. I laugh at the man who supposes Ireland will not be content with a free trade and a free constitution; and would any man advise her to be content with less? . . .

"I will not be answered by a public lie in the shape of an amendment; neither, speaking for the subject's freedom, am I to hear of faction. I wish for nothing but to breathe in this our island in common with my fellow-subjects the air of liberty. I have no ambition, unless it be the ambition to break your chain and contemplate your glory. I shall never be satisfied so long as the meanest cottager in Ireland has a link of British chain clanking to his rags; he may be naked, he shall not be in irons; and I do see the time is at hand, the spirit is gone forth, the declaration is planted, and although men should apostatise, yet the cause shall live; and though the public speaker should die, yet the immortal fire shall outlast the organ which conveyed it, and the breath of liberty, like the word

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of the holy man, will not die with the prophet, but survive him."

The splendid appeal was made in vain to a House of Commons subservient and corrupt. The motion was indefinitely adjourned, and no entry of it was permitted to appear on the journals of the House of Commons. But the moral effect of speech and motion was tremendous.

"No British minister," said Grattan, "will be mad enough to attempt, nor servant of the Government desperate enough to execute, nor Irish subject mean enough not to resist by every means in his power a British Act of Parliament."

The Viceroy, Lord Buckingham, took the same view. "It is with the utmost concern," he wrote to Lord Hillsborough, Home Secretary, "that I must acquaint your lordship that although so many gentlemen expressed their concern that the subject had been introduced the sense of the House against the obligation of any statute of the Parliament of Great Britain within the kingdom is represented to have been almost unanimous."

The Mutiny Act afforded a tempting opportunity for a trial of strength between the people and the Government. Hitherto the conduct of the army in Ireland had been regulated by an English Mutiny Act. That Act could no longer be enforced for the maintenance of discipline or the prevention or punishment of desertion. The following advertisement, which appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* of April 20th, shows how daring was the opposition to British-made statutes :—

"*To the Committee for conducting the Free Press. To the Justices of the Peace and all other Magistrates and Civil Officers throughout the Kingdom of Ireland.*

"GENTLEMEN,—As it is now a determined resolution of our House of Commons and all ranks of people in this kingdom that English statutes are of no force in this kingdom, I therefore think it my duty to warn you at your perils against paying any respect to the following advertisement, which seems fraught with private malice and a palpable attempt to establish English tyranny in this kingdom.

"'TWENTY GUINEAS REWARD FOR APPREHENDING A DESERTER.

"'Deserted from His Majesty's Second Regiment of Horse in Dublin, Dominick Hart, private, twenty-five years of age, five feet ten inches high, black hair, marked with smallpox, born at Main, Co. Longford. Whoever seizes said deserter shall (on application to the officer commanding the regiment in Dublin or any person writing an anonymous letter to said commanding officer pointing out how he may be taken) receive the above reward provided he be apprehended in consequence of such information. The money shall be left where or paid to whom the anonymous writer thinks proper and no questions asked.'

"As there is a respectable number of independent gentlemen determined to support the

freedom and consequence of their country and fellow-subjects, they hereby inform the above magistrates, &c., they will commence an action against any of them that detains the aforesaid Dominick Hart, and the said Hart is desired, if aggrieved, to apply by letter or otherwise to the printer hereof, who will direct him to those gentlemen who are determined to support him.

"ANTI-TYRANNUS."

In desperation the Government were constrained to own themselves beaten and accept an Irish Mutiny Bill. The Bill as it left the Irish Parliament was limited to a year: by the provision of the English Cabinet it was made perpetual. This innovation was denounced by Grattan as unconstitutional and dangerous to freedom in general, but an appeal to the Irish Parliament to stand by its own measure was rejected by a majority of one hundred and thirty-seven to seventy-three. Thereupon Grattan, in a formal instrument, appealed from Parliament to the people.

"The demand for national freedom," he declared, "is not the act of a faction, it is not the act of a party but of a people rising up like one man to claim their freedom. A whole people long depressed and cruelly derided flocking together with the most perfect order and each individual man from his own lips preferring his right to be free. Neither was the great act confined to one persuasion. But Protestant and Papist in such a cause, their ancient animosity subsiding, signed the

same declaration of right, and those whom neither time, nor severity, nor enmity, nor the penal code, nor its relaxation had been able to unite, in freedom found a rapid reconciliation. A certain flame rectified the humours of superstition. The time had arrived when the spirit of truth and liberty should descend on the man of Roman persuasion and touch his Catholic lips with public fire. He was tried and found faithful, he was weighed in the balance and found sufficient. We have learned at last a simple but great truth, that one man is like another and that all men wish to be free."

The Volunteers he exhorted : " Go on and prosper, thou sword of justice and shield of freedom, the living source of a cleansing flame, the foundation of our pride, providential interposition ; an army enriching the land with industry, costing the State nothing, adequate to all her enemies, and greater than all her revenues could pay. Awful indeed to a tyrant, but to a just prince an unconquerable strength. The custody of national character is in your hands. Go on and multiply and add immortal security to the cause of your country."

The Government was betrayed into the hopeless imbecility of hiring a certain Dr. Jebb to write a pamphlet in reply to Grattan. The only result, as the author of the pamphlet frankly confessed, was to secure a pension of £300 a year for himself.

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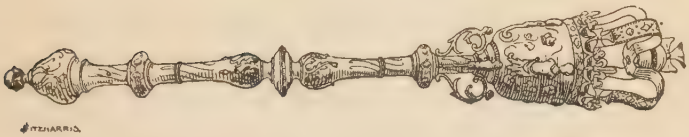
CHAPTER XIV

GRATTAN'S TRIUMPH



THE MACE OF THE IRISH HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Special pen-and-ink drawing made from the Mace in the Dublin Museum by Miss Fitzharris, with special permission of Viscount Masserene.

The Volunteer Convention at Dungannon—Description by an eye-witness—Demand for Independence—Sympathy with Catholics—Grattan again appeals to Parliament, is again repulsed—Pyrrhic victory for the Government—The third time of asking—A memorable day—Grattan triumphs—Parliament free—"*Esto perpetua!*"

GRATTAN'S appeal found a prompt response in the great Volunteer Convention at Dungannon. "This celebrated meeting," writes Sir Jonah Barrington, "was conducted with a decorum, firmness, and discretion unknown to popular meetings of other times and other countries. Steady, silent, and determined, two hundred delegated Volunteers, clothed in the uniform and armed with the arms of their respective regiments, marched two and two to the church of Dungannon, a place selected for its sanctity to give the greater solemnity to those memorable proceedings."

He describes in full the gathering, which was

" praised by every country of Europe." " Two hundred patriots in glittering arms selected by their countrymen assembled to proclaim the wrongs and grievances of the people and demand their redress."

Their prolonged deliberations, in which Grattan, Flood, and Lord Charlemont as commander-in-chief took a prominent part, resulted in a series of resolutions claiming their right as armed citizens to take part in the government of their country and proclaiming the independence of the Irish Parliament and Law Courts.

The first resolution declared that " the claim of any body of men other than the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland to make laws to bind Ireland is unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance." The last resolution, at Grattan's special instance, proclaimed that " as men, as Irishmen, as Christians, and as Protestants we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws of our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and that we conceive the measure to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the Union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland."

The " relaxation " which provoked this rejoicing was, indeed, of the most insignificant kind, but the friendly spirit that breathed through the resolution was of hopeful augury.

A few days later Grattan again moved a declaration of Irish Parliamentary Independence in the House of Commons. The speech was replete with historic research, logical argument, powerful appeal, and behind it was the driving force of the

Volunteers. In spite of argument and eloquence he was defeated by a majority of one hundred and thirty-seven to sixty-eight.

But this was a Pyrrhic victory for the Government, the harbinger of an ignominious defeat. The Lord-Lieutenant felt that his corrupt henchmen in the House of Commons could no longer be relied on. "I cannot expect," he wrote to Lord Hillsborough, "the administration to sacrifice for ever their weight with their fellow-countrymen by a resistance that would possibly lead to serious consequences."

If the Government were dismayed by their victory Grattan was emboldened by his defeat. On March 14th he gave notice for a renewal of his declaration for April 16th, and to emphasise the importance of the occasion he proposed and carried a motion that the Speaker should write circular letters to the members ordering them to attend that day as they regarded the rights of the Irish Parliament.

Meanwhile Lord North's Tory Government had fallen in England. Fox and his Liberal colleagues came into power, and the Duke of Portland was sent as Liberal Lord-Lieutenant to Ireland. Tremendous pressure was put on Grattan to postpone his motion, to give the new Lord-Lieutenant an opportunity of considering the situation, but Grattan was obdurate as steel.

The weak-kneed Lord Charlemont came to his bedside while he lay dangerously ill to counsel procrastination, told him of letters received from Fox, Sheridan, and other Liberal leaders, described

the doubts and hesitation of such sterling patriots as Daly, Yelverton, and Burgh, and begged for time.

"No time, no time," Grattan replied to all entreaties, and Charlemont was compelled to write at his dictation to Fox that the "question was now public property and could not be postponed."

Just two days after the arrival of the new Lord-Lieutenant the House of Commons met to vindicate or deny its independence. "Early on the 16th of April, 1782, long hours before the House could meet, the wide street in front of the House of Parliament was thronged by people of every class, from the highest to the lowest. "It becomes," writes an eye-witness, "a proper subject of remark that though more than many thousands of people, inflamed by the most ardent zeal, were assembled in a public street, without any guide, restraint, or control save the example of the Volunteers, there was not the slightest appearance of a tumult; on the contrary, such perfect order prevailed that not even an angry word or offensive expression escaped their lips.

"Nothing could more completely prove the good disposition of the Dublin populace than this correctness of demeanour at a time when they had been taught that the very existence of their trade and manufactures, and consequently the future subsistence of themselves and their families, was to be decided by the conduct of their representatives that very day. It was gratifying to see that those

who were supposed or even proved to have been their enemies were allowed to pass through this immense assemblage without receiving the slightest token of incivility, and with the same ease as those who were known to be their determined friends.

" By four o'clock a full meeting took place. The body of the House of Commons was crowded with its members, a great proportion of the peerage attended as auditors, and the capacious gallery which surrounded the interior magnificent dome of the House contained over four hundred ladies of the highest distinction, who partook of the same national fire which had enlightened their parents, their husbands, and their relatives, and by the sympathetic influence of their presence and zeal communicated an instinctive chivalrous impulse to eloquence and patriotism.

" Those who have only seen the tumultuous rush of Imperial Parliaments, scuffling in the antiquated chapel of St. Stephen's, crowded by a gallery of note-takers anxious to catch the public penny by the earliest report, can form no idea of the interesting appearance of the Irish House of Commons. The cheerful magnificence of its splendid architecture, the number, the decorum, and the brilliancy of the anxious auditory, the vital question that night to be determined, and the solemn dignity which clothed the proceedings of that awful moment produced an impression, even on disinterested strangers, which perhaps has never been so strongly or so justly excited by the appearance and proceedings of any other house of legislature."

The Government seemed to have still some hope of evading the issue. The direction of its forces was entrusted to the Secretary for State, Mr. Hely Hutchinson, the notorious pluralist, who united in his own person as many incongruous offices as Pooh Bah in the "Mikado."

No more acute commander could have been selected. He delivered a colourless message from the throne. "His Majesty, being concerned to find that discontents and jealousies were prevalent amongst his loyal subjects of Ireland upon matters of great weight and importance, recommended the House to take the same into most serious consideration in order to effect such a final adjustment as might give satisfaction to both countries."

Mr. Hutchinson, while expressly disclaiming any official authority, expressed himself personally in favour of an Independent Parliament. A solemn pause ensued. Grattan sat silent and Mr. Ponsonby rose and, after extravagantly eulogising the King and the Government, proposed a brief address "thanking his Majesty for his goodness and condescension and assuring him that his faithful Commons would immediately proceed to consider the great objects he had recommended for their consideration."

There was a moment of anxious silence as he resumed his seat. Every patriot in the House was oppressed by the fear that the great issue would drift away and be lost in dilatory discussion. "A low, confidential whisper ran through the House and every member seemed to court the sentiments

of his neighbour without venturing to express his own. The anxious spectators, inquisitively leaning forward, awaited with palpitation and expectation the development of the measures likely to decide the fate of their country, themselves, and their posterity. No middle course could possibly be adopted; immediate conciliation and tranquillity or revolt and revolution was the dilemma which forced itself upon every thinking mind."

All eyes were turned to where Grattan sat dressed in the uniform of the Volunteers, which hung loose upon his shrunken form. Weak and pale from a recent surgical operation, he had come at the peril of his life to declare his country's independence. It was a triumph of the unquenchable spirit. The whole House held its breath when at last he slowly rose, but when the first sentence was spoken it broke into a tumult of applause. He sounded the note of triumph from the first.

"I am now," he said, "to address a free people. Ages have passed away and this is the first moment you could be distinguished by that appellation.

"I have spoken on the subject of your liberty so often that I have nothing to add and have only to admire by what Heaven-directed steps you have proceeded until the whole faculty of the nation is braced up to the act of her own deliverance.

"I found Ireland on her knees; I watched over her with a paternal solicitude; I have traced her progress from injuries to arms and from arms to liberty. Spirit of Swift! Spirit of Molyneux! Your genius has prevailed! Ireland is now a

nation! In that new character I hail her, and bowing to her august presence, I say, '*Esto perpetua!*'

"She is no longer a wretched colony returning thanks to her governor for his rapine and to her king for his oppression, nor is she now a squabbling, fretful sectary, perplexing her little wits and firing her furious statutes with bigotry, sophistry, disabilities, and death, to transmit to posterity insignificance and war.

"Look at the rest of Europe and contemplate yourself and be satisfied. Holland lives on memory of past achievements; Sweden has lost liberty; England has sullied her great name by an attempt to enslave her colonies. You are the only people—you of the nations of Europe—are now the only people who excite admiration, and in your present conduct you not only exceed the present generation but you equal the past. I am not afraid to turn back and look antiquity in the face.

"You, with difficulties innumerable, with dangers not a few, have done what your ancestors wished but could not accomplish and what your posterity may preserve but never equal. You have moulded the jarring elements of your country into a Nation."

He concluded by moving resolutions demanding the repeal of the English Act 6th of George I., which averred that Acts of the English Parliament were binding on Ireland; protesting against mutilation or suppression by the Privy Council of England or Ireland of Acts passed by the Irish House of Commons and finally proclaiming—

[Photo W. Lawrence.

HARCOURT

STATUE OF HENRY GRATTAN

the Houses of Parliament is seen on the left, the statue of William III. in the background.

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" The kingdom of Ireland is a distinct kingdom with a Parliament of her own, and that there is no body of men competent to make laws to bind the nation but the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, nor any Parliament which hath any power or authority of any sort in this kingdom save only the Parliament of Ireland."

" To assure his Majesty," the address concluded, " we humbly conceive that in this right the very essence of our liberty exists, a right which we, on the part of all the people of Ireland, do claim as their birthright and which we cannot yield but with our lives."

His eloquence electrified the assembly. The brilliancy and force of his swelling periods seemed to recall the flashing swords of the Volunteers and the thunder of their guns. The patriots were inflamed to enthusiasm, the placemen were terrified into assent. Even men like Fitzgibbon, afterwards Lord Clare, and Scott, afterwards Lord Clonmel, who had been thereto the truculent enemies of liberty, hastened to stammer out their recantation.

The Declaration, twice rejected, was unanimously carried with the enforced consent of the Government.

The announcement was taken up with a burst of applause by the impatient crowd that thronged the broad spaces of College Green, and the cheering was echoed from every street, almost from every house in the metropolis, which all that day and night gave free vent to the universal congratulation and rejoicing.

Still the victory could not be regarded as complete until the Royal consent had been given to the bold and uncompromising Address, and the House met again on the 27th of May to receive the British reply to their demand.

But in England it had been recognised that the alternative to concession was defiance, and England, enfeebled and humiliated by the American War, had no forces that could hope to cope with the Volunteers. Only one reply was possible. The Duke of Portland, addressing the Irish House for the first time, proclaimed his satisfaction that he was "enabled by the magnanimity of the King and the wisdom of the Parliament of Great Britain to assure you that immediate attention has been paid to your representations and that the British Legislature has concurred in the resolution to remove the causes of your discontents and jealousies and are united in a desire to gratify every wish expressed in your late address to the throne."

The declamatory Act of George I. was repealed in England. Poynings' Law was repealed in Ireland. The Irish Parliament shook off its broken fetters and was free.

CHAPTER XV

THE INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENT

The character of the Parliament—Brilliant, eloquent and corrupt—The practice of duelling universal—An old man's advice—Eccentricities of "Bully" Egan—Curran's chalk line—Toler "shot onto the bench."—The University affected—Grattan not exempt—The fruits of independence.

THE Parliament was free but the country was not free. Grattan had indeed liberated the Irish Parliament from English control, but he had not submitted it to the control of the people of Ireland. Unreformed and corrupt as we have seen, the Irish "Independent" Parliament faintly represented the views of the Protestant minority, the great Catholic majority it did not represent at all. In the words of Moore's "Captain Rock"—

> "Ireland did still pretend,
> Like a sugarloaf turned upside down,
> To stand upon her smaller end,"

and the attitude was fatal to the equilibrium of her constitution.

Grattan's Parliament failed to justify Grattan's boast that it had "moulded the jarring elements of the country into a nation." Four-fifths of the

people were still outside the constitution, but of him at least it may be truly said that the wish was father of the thought.

Still Grattan spoke truly when he said that the Parliament was the "greatest that ever sat in Ireland." There was an amazing assemblage of statesmanship and eloquence within the walls of the old House in College Green. Grattan, Flood, Hussey, Burgh, Yelverton, Parsons, Langushe, Bushe, Hely Hutchinson, Foster, Sir John Parnell, and, later, Curran, Plunket, and a host of others amongst the patriots, and on the other side Lord Clare, Lord Clonmel, and Lord Castlereagh were all men of surpassing power in debate. Where shall we find men like them to-day? The front benches of the English House of Commons would be searched in vain for their equals.

For close reasoning and passionate appeal the Irish orators were equally distinguished. "The Parliamentary Register of the History of Proceedings and Debates in the House of Commons in Ireland," which began in 1781 and lasted till 1800, is a golden treasury of eloquence. It would be, in Burke's famous phrase, "not so much gross flattery as uncivil irony" to suggest that the Hansard Reports could compare with it. Even from the few isolated extracts scattered through those pages, the reader may form some notion of the brilliancy and power of Grattan's Parliament.

Its orators had, however, the defects to their qualities. Their extravagance made them prone to corruption, their temperament tempted them to

fierce personal attack. The scolding match between Flood and Grattan, to which allusion must be made later on, is one of the most splendid specimens of glorified vituperation on record.

It has been said that the practice of duelling encouraged temperance of language, because rudeness so often meant death. It was not found so in Ireland in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The practice was universal. Counties were distinguished by their weapons: Galway for the sword, Tipperary, Sligo, and Roscommon for the pistol, and Mayo for equal skill in both.

The Bar, the Bench, and Parliament were equally pervaded with a passion for duelling, which might be fairly described as a national institution. A regular duelling code was established, and a quaint volume is still extant entitled "The Practice of Duelling and Points of Honour settled at Clonmel Summer Assizes by Gentlemen Delegates from Tipperary, Galway, and presented for General Adoption throughout Ireland."

Even the University was not immune from the all-pervading fever. Hely Hutchinson, Provost of Trinity, to whom allusion has been already made, established a fencing-school in the College and gave good example, which the students were quick to follow, by challenging and fighting a Mr. Doyle, a Master in Chancery.

The article of the *Cornhill Magazine* of 1865, already referred to, describes Hely Hutchinson, in or out of Parliament, as "one of the most provoking of human beings. At the hustings or in the senate

he was equally a terror to peaceful people, and his sons so nearly resembled their sire that at one Irish election time he and three of his sons were on the same day engaged in duels! On another day Hutchinson challenged the old Attorney-General Tisdale, but Tisdale declined. 'If I should kill you,' said the aged lawyer, 'I should get nothing but the pleasure of killing you, whereas if you kill me you will get my place of Secretary of State of which you have the reversion.' Hely's rapacity was notorious, and this Provost of Dublin is said, in a political crisis, to have squeezed from Lord Townsend a majorship of dragoons, the duties of which were performed by a deputy. Lord North took correct measure of this famous Irish M.P., and before introducing him to George III. told the King, in words which have never been forgotten: "Mr. Hutchinson is a man on whom, if your Majesty was pleased to bestow the United Kingdom, he would ask for the Isle of Man as a potato garden.'"

At the beginning of the nineteenth century a young barrister consulted Dr. Hodgkinson, Vice-Provost of Trinity, then a very old man, as to the best law books to read. The doctor, who had been long secluded from the world, reverted to the time when he was a young barrister himself, and his advice was: "My young friend, practise four hours a day at Rigley's pistol gallery; it is the very best kind of 'practice' to help you to the Bench."

He had grounds for his advice. A duelling

pistol was as essential to a barrister as his law books. Among the barristers most distinguished in this way was "Bully" Egan, afterwards Chairman of Quarter Sessions in Dublin. He was a big, dark, burly man of formidable appearance, but of so soft a heart that he blubbered over every prisoner he sentenced. It was his boast that he had fought more duels than any man in the profession, and though he was so compassionate in sentencing malefactors he never had the least hesitation about shooting a friend.

On one occasion he fought the Master of the Rolls at Donnybrook before a crowd of spectators, who looked on the performance as a comedy. His antagonist had first shot, and when he had fired he walked coolly away, declaring his honour was satisfied.

"Come back, come back," roared Egan; "I must have a shot at your honour!"

But when the other returned he declared he could not be bothered shooting him, and that he might shake hands or go to the devil, whichever he pleased.

On another occasion "Bully" Egan fell out in court over a point of law with another barrister named Killer. The court was adjourned; the disputants crossed the River Suir in a ferry-boat to the adjoining county of Kilkenny, and having exchanged shots without effect returned to the patient judge to resume the law argument.

Another story is told how Egan once had a duel with his particular friend Curran, and how

Egan objected that the fight wasn't fair because he was so big and his opponent so small.

"All right," retorted Curran; "let the seconds chalk out a man of my size on you, and anything outside the chalk lines *won't count*."

Toler, Lord Norbury, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, fought a score of duels. "So distinguished," we read, "was Mr. Toler for his deeds in this way that he was always the man depended on to frighten the Opposition: and so rapid was his promotion in consequence that it was said that he 'shot' up to the Bench."

Almost every judge of the High Court and every member of the House of Commons had been "out." Fitzgibbon, Attorney-General, afterwards Lord Clare, who as Chancellor was chief ruler of Ireland and engineer of the Union, fought with Curran, afterwards Master of the Rolls, with enormous pistols more than a foot long.

Curran, for his part, called out Lord Buckingham, Lord-Lieutenant for Ireland. Grattan himself was as ready as any to demand or render satisfaction at the muzzle of the pistol. He began by fighting Lord Earlsfort. He made determined efforts to meet Flood in the field, and having delivered a fierce reply in the House of Commons to the attack of Isaac Corry, Chancellor of the Exchequer, he adjourned to the Phœnix Park to shoot him through the arm.

To our modern notions debate and legislation must have been a little too exciting under such sanction. But in those days a duel was deemed

an ordinary, everyday occurrence not worth bothering about beforehand, or afterwards—if you chanced to survive.

In spite of all its limitations, Grattan's Parliament unquestionably rendered immense services to Ireland, and it commanded a respect and loyalty, even among the ostracised Catholics, which was never yielded to the Parliament of England. It may be that the people felt with Byron—

> "Our masters then
> Were still at least our countrymen."

Mr. Redmond has more than once declared that it is better for a country to govern itself badly than to be well governed by a foreign nation. His view is amply justified by the results of Irish Independence. The Irish Parliament as then established was afflicted with almost every fault that could disable a legislative body; its one redeeming virtue was that it was Irish. In spite of all its other limitations the years between its establishment and its fall, between 1782 and 1800, were the brightest in the history of Ireland.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE RIFT

Grattan's apotheosis—Offered the Viceregal Lodge—Grant of £50,000—The rift in the lute—Envy of Flood—His ability and character—Humorous speech of Mr. Scott—"Go on, Harry"—Simple Repeal *versus* Renunciation—Tweedledum and Tweedledee—Flood captures the Volunteers—Fierce invective of Grattan—An interrupted duel—Permanent estrangement.

GRATTAN was the hero of the hour; Parliament and people competed to do him honour, and the Government felt constrained to join, however reluctantly, in the competition. An offer made by the Viceroy of a free gift of the Viceregal Lodge in the Phoenix Park, the King's only palace in Ireland, was rejected by Grattan; a tribute of £100,000 from Parliament was also rejected; a diminished grant of £50,000 was at last accepted on the urgent representations of his friends, that the income thus provided would free him from the claims of his profession, would exempt him from the trammels of office, and would enable him to devote himself exclusively to the services of his country.

But when this tumult of congratulation died

away the whisper of envy began to be heard. Almost from his boyhood Grattan had been the fast friend of the veteran Flood, but already there appeared—

> "A little rift within the lute
> That by and by should make the music mute,
> And slowly widening sadly silence all."

Henry Flood was unquestionably a man of brilliant parts, a statesman and an orator. The cooler judgment of posterity must pronounce him a patriot as well, though there were grounds for questioning his patriotism. But it is beyond question from many incidents in his career that he was of arrogant disposition and jealous in the extreme of another's fame.

Having repeatedly pressed for the amendment of Poynings' Law, he abandoned the question when he joined the Government. Yet when it was raised later by Yelverton he complained bitterly that it had been taken out of his hands. "The honourable gentleman," he said, "is erecting a temple to liberty on my foundations. I hope to be allowed at least a niche in the fane."

To this Yelverton aptly replied: "It is wrong under ordinary circumstances to interfere between man and wife, but if a man deserted and abandoned his wife for seven years another might support her and give her protection."

Flood claimed the chief credit for Ireland's commercial emancipation because he had changed the words "Free export and import"

into "Free Trade," which had exactly the same meaning. Jealousy made him lukewarm, if not hostile, to Grattan's campaign for parliamentary independence. He wished, he said, to postpone the movement, "as the time of England's distress was the improper time to bring it forward." He urged that "by a well-timed stroke of Irish generosity we might obtain from her a measure declaratory of the rights of Ireland."

In a famous speech of Mr. Scott, afterwards Lord Clonmel, Flood is humorously described as Harry Plantagenet, telling his own story of a poacher turned huntsman and huntsman turned poacher again. Mr. Scott described himself having met Harry Plantagenet psalm-singing and urged him to tell the story of his life.

"'As I lived near Windsor Forest,' said Harry, 'when a boy I used frequently to divert myself with hunting the King's deer, for I loved to hunt the King's deer.'—'Go on, Harry,' said I.—'I halloed and shouted so loud and so often that there was not a dog in the pack but obeyed my voice, not a lad in the forest but attended to my call.'—'Go on, Harry,' said I.—'At last the chief huntsman, perceiving what command I had over the dogs and the sportsmen, resolved to take me into his pay.'—'Go on, Harry,' said I.—'I accepted the offer but I now found myself so much at my ease that I grew indolent and I soon perceived that the younger fellows who could now outride me were greater favourites with the chief huntsman.'—'Go on, Harry,' said I.—'I determined to pick a quarrel

with the chief huntsman and I immediately began to hunt in opposition. But not a dog obeyed me, not a sportsman attended to my call; I roared and shouted until I was weary; I had the mortification to find that I had totally lost my influence in the forest.' "

The roars of laughter with which the story was received in the House proved that the speaker had happily hit off the character and experiences of Flood.

It is easy to imagine what must have been the feelings of such a man when his junior, one whom in his boyhood he had himself instructed in oratory and public affairs, should suddenly spring into a position of such dazzling pre-eminence, the applauded of the Court, the Parliament, and the nation, leaving his whilom master completely in the shade.

Flood had supported, without enthusiasm indeed, but also without protest, Grattan's declaration of parliamentary independence, of which the essence was the repeal of the declaratory law of George I., which, " for the better securing of the dependence of Ireland on England," asserted the right of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland and subjected the Irish law courts to the appellate jurisdiction of the English. But when the Act was repealed and his rival was at the height of his fame, Flood began at first to insinuate and afterwards to boldly declare that simple repeal was wholly ineffectual and insufficient. The power thus abandoned by England might, he contended, be

resumed; Ireland's only real security was an Act of Renunciation by England.

To this Grattan vehemently objected. "If," he said in the House, "the security which the honourable gentleman wants be a British statute I reject it. I would reject Magna Charta under a British statute. We have not come to England for a charter but with a charter, and we have required her to cancel all her declarations made in opposition to it."

The controversy was, of course, wholly futile, one of those logical-political disquisitions leading nowhere in which the age delighted. The distinction taken by those two great men was the distinction between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. It would not have mattered a pin's point whether Flood had agreed with Grattan on "simple repeal" or Grattan with Flood on "renunciation." Either would have sufficed, or both. But Grattan declared that Renunciation was pernicious and impossible, and Flood insisted that it was obtainable and indispensable.

A few years later a Renunciation Bill was passed declaring the independence of the Irish Parliament and the Irish law courts, "to be established and ascertained for ever and at no time hereafter be questionable or questioned." A few years later still the independence of both the Parliament and the law courts was extinguished by the Union.

If Flood was most to blame in the inception of the dispute Grattan was most to blame in its conduct. He resented the suggestion of a Renun-

ciation Bill with something like ferocity. When Flood put down a motion for inquiry on the subject Grattan declared "the continuance of the agitation to be due to rancour and disappointed ambition," and moved the following extraordinary amendment: "That the legislature of Ireland was independent and that any person who should propagate in writing or otherwise an opinion that any right whatever, external or internal, existed in any other Parliament, or could be resumed, to make laws for Ireland, was inimical to both kingdoms."

Subsequently he substituted a more reasonable amendment, which he carried unanimously: "That leave be refused to bring in heads of a [Renunciation] Bill because the sole and exclusive right of legislation for Ireland in the Irish Parliament in all cases, whether externally or internally, has been already ascribed to Ireland and fully and finally and irrevocably acknowledged by the British Parliament."

Flood vainly moved that the word "finally" should be omitted. Grattan's parliamentary triumph was complete. But the terms of his first unhappy resolution were bitterly remembered against him when the country gradually became converted to the doctrine of Renunciation.

At the end of the same year there was published in a patriot organ columns of abuse, over the signature of "Hampden Alter," denouncing Grattan and the original amendment. "In a word, Mr. Grattan," the letter concluded, "conscious that your doctrine of simple repeal would

never bear investigation, conscious that you had imposed upon your countrymen a mean and inadequate security of their rights, you had no means left to preserve your character but by attempting to obtain a parliamentary resolution compelling the subjects of both kingdoms to embrace your opinions, an attempt that is marked with a greater degree of vanity, insolence, and iniquity than is to be matched in the political annals of mankind."

It was among the ranks of the Volunteers that Flood's doctrines found most favour. Resolutions condemning simple repeal as ineffective and demanding an Act of Renunciation were passed by various bodies of Volunteers throughout the country. The lawyers' corps at a very early stage appointed a committee to consider the subject. The committee reported, and the corps approved of the report, that " repealing a declaration was not destroying a principle and that a statute renouncing any pre-existing right was an indispensable guarantee for future security. Therefore," ran the report, " an express renunciation should accompany the repeal of a declaratory Act."

The corps of Independent Dublin Volunteers were next infected. Grattan was the colonel of the corps, elected by acclamation, and he had worn their uniform when he had carried the Address of Independence.

That same corps now presented him with an address, respectfully but firmly demanding that he, as their colonel, " should assist with his hearty

concurrence and strenuous support the view" [in favour of Renunciation] "propounded by a committee chosen from the best informed body in this nation."

It was a bitter pill to swallow, but if Grattan had accepted the address all might have been well with the country. There can be no doubt that he, co-operating with Flood, could have at once secured a Bill of Renunciation and so ended the unhappy controversy. Those two great leaders would then have been able to work in harmony for Reform and Catholic Emancipation. But Grattan, so far from yielding, took such umbrage at the address that he practically resigned the colonelcy of the corps. "A peremptory resignation," he said, "they might construe as an offence, but at the next election they might indulge the range of their disposition in selecting a new colonel." "There is a final justice," he concluded, "in public opinion on which I do not fear to stand."

Other bodies that addressed him on the same topic received similar rebuffs, so it came to pass that Flood rose into favour with the Volunteers as Grattan fell out. As a result the conduct of affairs passed from Grattan's control to Flood's, and Flood, though a man of commanding ability, was no adequate substitute for Grattan. He was, moreover, hampered by the open hostility or lukewarm support of his greater rival.

Perhaps it was too much to expect that the author of Free Trade and the liberator of Parliament, conscious of his own great services, could

patiently endure a campaign which he not unnaturally believed to have been inspired by envy and encouraged by folly. A growing anger against an ancient friend worked like poison in his blood. Consciously or unconsciously, it coloured his views and perverted his judgment. Whatever Flood proposed he resisted, or at best (if resistance seemed too flagrant) lent it a half-hearted and discouraging support. No man could more effectually—

> "Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
> And without sneering teach the rest to sneer."

When at last Flood moved for a reduction in the enormous military expenditure the long-smouldering fire broke out in scorching flame. So far as it is possible at this date to judge of the proposal Flood appears to have been wholly in the right. Though the country had already felt the impetus of a free trade and an independent Parliament and the revenue was rapidly expanding, the bloated expenditure more than kept pace with the expansion and there was an annual deficit. Apart from her huge military establishment, Ireland had in the Volunteers a national army of a hundred thousand men, armed and equipped for service and costing not a farthing to the exchequer.

Flood's motion to decrease this extravagant military establishment had the warm support of Lord Charlemont who had introduced Grattan to Parliament, and Grattan's opposition, which he regarded as factious, was the cause of the final breach between them. Their friendship

closed with a foolish letter from his lordship in which he accused Grattan of ingratitude.

But the breach with Flood was more startling, more dramatic, more violent. That the retrenchment was proposed by his rival was sufficient to induce Grattan to oppose it. But his opposition was probably embittered by the belief that Flood, in reducing the regular military establishment, had in his mind to increase the power and influence of the Volunteer movement, which Grattan had begun to regard as dangerous as soon as its control slipped from his own hands.

The personal note in the debate began with Grattan, who struck Flood on the most vulnerable part of his career by reminding him that the present advocate for the reduction of military expenditure had voted "the sending of four thousand Irish troops to butcher our brethren in America." Flood was not merely ready but eager for the fray. He replied with a fierce personal attack on Grattan, whose career, however, left no loophole for effective invective. In defiance of the manifest truth, Flood described him as "a mendicant patriot whom his country had bought for £50,000 and who had sold his country for prompt payment."

Flood was plainly proud of this performance and regarded Grattan as utterly crushed by his attack. "If the honourable gentleman," he said at the close of his speech, "enters into many such discussions with me he will not have much to boast of at the end of the sessions."

From this self-complacent delusion poor Flood

had a swift and terrible awakening. The long-restrained wrath of Grattan broke loose at once in a tide of fierce, implacable, irresistible eloquence, a stream of living fire that scorched and withered its victim. The speech is still read and quoted as the supreme masterpiece of virulent invective.

"But it is not," he said in the course of that terrible speech, "the slander of an evil tongue that can defame me. I maintain my reputation in public and in private life. No man who has not a bad character can say I deceived; no country can call me a cheat. But I will suppose such a public character. I will suppose such a man to have existence. I will begin with his character in his political cradle; I will follow him to the last state of political dissolution.

"I will suppose him in the first stage of his life to have been intemperate, in the second to have been corrupt, in the last seditious. After an envenomed attack on the persons and measures of a succession of Viceroys, and after much declamation against their illegalities and their profusion, he took office and became a supporter of Government when the profusion of ministers had greatly increased and their crimes multiplied beyond example.

"With regard to the liberties of America, which were inseparable from ours, I will suppose this gentleman to have been an enemy, decided and unreserved; that he voted against her liberty, and voted, moreover, for an address to send four thousand Irish troops to cut the throats of the

Americans; that he called these butchers 'armed negotiators' and stood with a metaphor in his mouth and a bribe in his pocket, a champion against the rights of America, the only hope of Ireland and the only refuge of the liberties of mankind.

"Thus defective in every relationship, whether to constitution, commerce, or toleration, I will suppose this man to have added much private improbity to public crimes. His probity was like his patriotism and his honour on a level with his oath. He loves to deliver panegyrics on himself: I will interrupt him and say, 'Sir, you are much mistaken if you think your talents have been as great as your life has been reprehensible; you began your parliamentary career with an acrimony and personality which would have been justified only by a supposition of virtue. After a rank and clamorous opposition you became on a sudden silent; you were silent for seven years; you were silent on the greatest questions and you were silent for money!

"'In 1773, while a negotiation was pending to sell your talents and your turbulence, you absconded from your duty in Parliament, you forsook your law of Poynings, you forsook the questions of economy and abandoned all the old themes of your former declamation; you were not at that period to be found in the House; you were seen like a guilty spirit haunting the lobby of the House of Commons watching the moment in which the question should be put that you might vanish. You were descried, with a criminal anxiety, retiring from

the scenes of your past glory, or you were perceived coasting the upper benches of this House like a bird of prey, with an evil aspect and sepulchral note meditating to pounce on its quarry. These ways, they were not the ways of honour, you practised pending a negotiation which was to end either in your sale or your sedition. . . .

" ' But you found at last (and this should be an eternal lesson to men of your craft) that the King had only dishonoured you; the Court had bought but would not trust you; and having voted for the worst measures you remained for seven years the creature of salary without the confidence of the Government. Mortified at the discovery, and stung by disappointment, you betake yourself to the sad expedients of duplicity; you try the sorry game of a trimmer in your progress to the acts of incendiary; you give no honest support either to the Government or to the people.

" ' Such has been your conduct and at such conduct every order of your fellow-men has a right to exclaim. The merchant may say to you, the constitutionalist may say to you, the American may say to you, and I now say to your beard, " Sir, you are not an honest man." ' "

This savage contest was witnessed by a crowded House of Commons as the old Romans witnessed a gladiator show, with intense excitement and delight, and with prolonged applause for the relentless victor. Flood at once rose to answer him. But he almost instantly lapsed into such unparliamentary violence that the Speaker felt obliged to

restrain him. A few days later he delivered a calm and dignified reply.

"Can you believe," wrote General Burgoyne to Charles Fox, "that the House heard the discussion for two hours without interference? On the contrary, every one seemed to rejoice as his favourite gladiator gave or parried a stroke, and when the Chair at last interfered they were suffered, with an inattention which seemed on purpose, to withdraw themselves."

A challenge to a duel was the inevitable outcome of such an interchange of invective, but the Speaker had them both arrested and bound to the peace. Throughout Grattan seemed more eager for the duel than his rival.

The aristocracy seem, for the most part, to have taken Flood's side in the quarrel, though their favour was somewhat unstable. In a very rare book published in 1820, entitled "Original Letters principally from Lord Charlemont, the Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke, William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and many other distinguished Noblemen and Gentlemen to the Right Hon. Henry Flood," is to be found a letter from the Duke of Chandos—"Avington, 9th Nov., 1783"—which begins:—

"The great anxiety of mind which the Duchess and myself have suffered from the receipt of your letter of the 30th past and first instant you must more easily conceive than I can express. We both unite in one idea and one request. We are thoroughly convinced that you have been most grossly, maliciously, and enviously attacked and

insulted by Mr. G., which nothing can justify and whose conduct must be reprobated by every one breathing possessed either of good sense or honour. You have acted like a man of principle and feeling in consequence of his ill-usage, and to take any further steps, particularly after what happened in the House of Commons afterwards, would draw down the censure of rashness on yourself."

A long correspondence ensued between the Duke and Flood, which, after continuing for a while in the same affectionate and complimentary strain, gradually descends to acrimonious recriminations (written in the third person) in regard to a borough purchased by Flood from the Duke and winds up with a declaration that "as matters stood Mr. Flood, if he were to deliver his sentiments, must declare that the Duke of Chandos had acted dishonourably by him. It is with great pain that he feels that this declaration is extorted from him." In a final letter Flood suggests a duel: "I will give," so he writes, "every satisfaction to his Grace for the liberty I must take which my life can offer."

In later years Grattan regretted his vitriolic speech. He spoke with much respect of Flood and paid a graceful tribute to his memory when he died. But the evil was done. Each of the two great leaders of the Independent Irish Parliament was committed to relentless hostility to any policy, however admirable, that was supported by the rival. A fatal jealousy was engendered,

"The direful spring of woes unnumbered,"

to their common country.

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Francis Wheatley, R.A.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

THE VOLUNTEERS IN COLLEGE GREEN.

A drawing made after the picture in the National Gallery for the purpose of engraving.

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CHAPTER XVII

A RIVAL PARLIAMENT

The Volunteers and Reform—Assembly at the Rotunda—The Bishop of Derry—An Irish Wolsey—His character, retinue, and costume—Charlemont chosen chairman—The Catholic claims—Reform refused—Parliament challenges the Convention—Charlemont's ignoble surrender—Exit the Irish Volunteers.

GRATTAN'S withering invective seems to have in no way affected Flood's growing popularity with the Volunteers, who were by this time strongly infected with his doctrine of renunciation as opposed to simple repeal. Another Volunteer Convention was organised in favour of Parliamentary Reform. In numbers and splendour the Dublin Convention much surpassed the original Convention at Dungannon, but fell far short of its achievement. A contemporary writer, Sir Jonah Barrington, estimates that as many as one hundred and twenty thousand Volunteers were represented in the great gathering in Dublin. This is probably an over-estimate, but it is certain that at this period the Volunteers numbered as many as one hundred thousand men under arms. Barrington gives a

graphic description of the meeting in the Round Room (Rotunda), being "the finest room in Ireland and best adapted for the meeting."

"It was," he writes, "and continues to be, the great assembly-room of Dublin. It consists of a circular saloon of very large dimensions, with numerous and very spacious chambers, and terminates in Sackville Street, the finest of the Irish metropolis."

There were two candidates for the presidency of this great Convention. On one hand the feeble and timid Conservative Lord Charlemont, who had reached to prominence solely through his early connection with Grattan, and on the other the fearless democrat Earl of Bristol, the Protestant Bishop of Derry. Surely never were two rivals in sharper contrast. The Bishop of Derry, of whom too little is remembered, might be described as an Irish Wolsey, with this distinction, that Wolsey was a plebeian turned aristocrat while Bristol was a noble turned democrat. A British noble and an Irish bishop, he forgot alike mitre and coronet in his character of patriot.

But he was as splendid as Wolsey himself in his appointments and retinue. Sir Jonah Barrington thus describes his ordinary costume: "He was generally dressed entirely in purple, and he wore diamond knee and shoe buckles, but what I observed most in his address was that he wore white gloves with white fringes round the wrists and large gold tassels hanging from them." Of the splendour of his retinue we can form some idea

from the description of his approach to the Convention.

"The Lords had taken their seats in the House of Peers when the Bishop of Derry began his procession to take his seat in the Convention. He had several carriages in his suite, and sat in an open landau drawn by six beautiful horses caparisoned with purple ribbons. He had brought to Dublin as his escort a troop of light cavalry raised by his unfortunate and guilty nephew, George Robert Fitzgerald. They were splendidly dressed and accoutred, and mounted on the finest chargers that the Bishop or their commander could procure. A part of these dragoons led the procession, another closed it, and some rode on each side of his lordship's carriage. Trumpets announced his approach and detachments from several Volunteer corps of Dublin joined his lordship's cavalcade. He never ceased making dignified obeisances to the multitude, and his salutations were enthusiastically returned on every side. 'Long live the Bishop!' echoed from every window.

"Yet all was peace and harmony. Never did there appear so extraordinary a procession within the realms of Ireland. This cavalcade marched slowly through the different streets till it arrived at the portico of the House of Lords, which adjoined that of the Commons. A short halt was then made, the trumpets sounded, the sudden and unexpected clangour of which echoed through the long corridors. Both Houses had just finished prayers and were proceeding to business, and

totally unconscious of the cause several members rushed to the entrance. The Bishop saluted all with royal dignity. The Volunteers presented arms and the bands played the Volunteers' march. Of a sudden, another clangour of trumpets was heard. The astonished Lords and Commons, unable to divine what was to ensue or the reason of the extraordinary appearance of the Bishop, returned to their respective chambers and with great solicitude awaited the result.

"The Bishop, however, had done what he had intended. He had astonished both Houses and proved to them his principles and his determination; amidst the shouts and cheers of thousands he proceeded to the Rotunda."

Like Grattan, the Bishop of Derry was a thoroughgoing, outspoken advocate of Catholic Emancipation. "One million of divided Protestants," he declared, "can never in the scales of human government be a counterpoise for three million of united Catholics."

If the Bishop of Derry had succeeded in securing the control of the Convention the result would have probably been widely different from what it was. He certainly would never have yielded to the defiance of a corrupt House of Commons determined to perpetuate its own corruption.

But while Grattan, like Achilles, sulked in his tent, Flood was master of the situation. Grattan had begun to deprecate the influence of the Volunteers when the Volunteers declared for the policy of Flood. While he vindicated their right

to insist on parliamentary independence he seemed to deny their right to insist upon parliamentary reform, without which no real or continued independence was possible. The Volunteers were *functus officio,* he considered, when by their aid he carried the Declaration of Independence ; their duty afterwards was " to hang up their arms in the temple of Liberty and cultivate the blessings of peace."

But Flood realised that the temple was not yet complete, and without the help of the Volunteers it would speedily crumble into ruin. Reform was essential to independence. The country could not unreservedly entrust its fate to a Parliament of whose three hundred members a hundred and twenty-four were nominated by fifty borough-mongers, and of whom one hundred and twenty-eight were placemen, wholly dependent on the Government.

Flood used his unbounded influence with the Volunteers to secure the presidency of Lord Charlemont, who, like himself, was opposed to Catholic Emancipation, which Flood's rival, Grattan, and Charlemont's rival, the Bishop of Derry, both strongly supported.

The capital was in a frenzy of excitement at the assembly of this armed Parliament from which such great things were expected. " The artillery had scarcely announced the entry of the delegates into the Rotunda when the silent respect which had pervaded the entire population during the procession yielded to more lively feelings, no longer could

the people restrain their joy. At first a low murmur seemed to proceed from different quarters, which soon increasing in its fervour at length burst into a universal cheer of triumph, like distant thunder, gradually rolling on until one great and continued peal burst upon the senses. The loud and incessant cheering of the people soon reverberated from street to street, contributing the whole powers of acclamation to glorify an assembly which they vainly conceived must be omnipotent. It was an acclamation, long, sincere, and unanimous, and occasionally died away only to be renewed with redoubled energy. The vivid interest excited by this affecting and extraordinary scene can never be conceived, save by those who were present and participated in its feelings, nor can time nor age obliterate it from the memory.

" It is not unworthy to remark that a wonderful proportion of female voices was distinguishable amidst these plaudits. A general illumination took place throughout the city, bands of music were heard everywhere, and never did a day and night of rejoicing so truly express the unsophisticated gratification of an entire population. The Government was astonished ; the Privy Council had sat, but were far from unanimous, and had separated without decision. The old courtiers called the scene frantic, but it was not the frenzy of a mob, it was the triumph of a nation.

" The scene within was still more novel and impressive. The varied uniforms of the delegates had a very singular appearance. Sent from

different regiments, no two of them were dressed or armed alike; cavalry, infantry, all possible varieties of military dress, were collected in one general body destined to act solely in a civil capacity.

"The cheers, the cannon, the music, the musketry, combined to prevent any procedure that day save that of the members giving in their delegations and nominating some officers to act during the session."

A significant and ominous incident marred the opening of the proceedings. Lord Charlemont had scarcely taken the chair when Sir Boyle Roche, the chartered buffoon of the House of Commons, famous even to our own day for bad jokes and good bulls, obtruded himself on the Convention as ambassador for Lord Kenmare to announce that the noble lord himself and "others of his creed whom he presumed to represent disavowed any desire for franchise and, fully sensible of the favours already bestowed on them by Parliament, felt but one desire, to enjoy them in peace without asking for more."

Next day, however, the Bishop of Derry, on behalf of a great meeting of Catholics held the night before, repudiated this mean-spirited declaration. "We do not," declared the Catholics, "so widely differ from the rest of mankind as by our own act to prevent the removal of our shackles."

But it may be fairly suspected that the abject submission of Lord Kenmare had an ill effect on the subsequent proceedings of the Convention. If Grattan had been there as in Parliament, over-

powering all opposition by his eloquence, no doubt a resolution in favour of Emancipation would have been carried and the enthusiasm of the great body of the people would have given an irresistible impetus to the movement for Reform. But Charlemont and Flood continued to oppose any political concession to Catholics, and the Convention contented itself with a moderate scheme of Reform, which Flood undertook to introduce at once in the House of Commons.

It was a delicate, difficult, and dangerous task. The Bill, though moderate in form, threatened two-thirds of the members with political extinction. Grattan's fiery and eloquent determination might have forced it on a reluctant House of Commons, but Grattan was for the moment an extinct volcano. He had not the magnanimity to help the triumph of a hated rival even in a cause to which he was no less deeply pledged. He gave faint-hearted support to the measure, hardly less fatal than open opposition.

"Grattan," the Viceroy wrote a few days later to Fox, "having pledged himself to the idea of reform of Parliament, voted against us and spoke. But his speech evidently showed that he meant us no harm, and on the question of the resolution to support the Parliament he voted with us."

For the rest the debate was fast and furious. The Government, taking its courage in both hands, resolved at one blow to defeat Reform and break for ever the power of the Volunteers. The cue they took was the refusal of the House of Commons to

submit to the insolent dictation of an armed assembly, just as Falstaff, when cornered by the prince, refused " to give a reason on compulsion." " If reasons were as plentiful as blackberries," he said, " I would give no man a reason on compulsion." So the corrupt Parliament, while constrained to confess the necessity of Reform, refused to reform itself on the compulsion of the Volunteers. The daring and dangerous Fitzgibbon denounced the Volunteers in the most extravagant language. He was answered by Curran in what appears to have been his first appearance in debate, his debut as a patriot. Only a disjointed fragment of the speech survives.

" I am surprised," he said, " to see a man rising up with the violence of a maniac to tell us this Bill ought not to be proposed while the Convention is sitting. But the Volunteers are not your enemies, they have no enemies but those of their country. That Reform has long been necessary has been proved by the history of the nation. Why were you so long slaves? because your Parliament was corrupt. Why, while your hearts still throbbed at your newly acquired constitution, at the glory which Ireland had achieved, did you sink that glory in the slavery of an adulatory Address? Since we have met we have been talking of retrenchment and reviving a course of the most profligate profusion, while our miserable fellow-countrymen are roving the streets for bread. You are urged to reject the Bill because it springs from the Convention. I warn you not to make war on the Volunteers."

The most insidious attack on the Bill was, however delivered by the one time patriot Yelverton, then Attorney-General for Ireland.

" If this Bill," he said, " as it is notorious it does, originates from an armed body, I reject it. Shall we sit here to be dictated to at the point of the bayonet? Is the Convention or the Parliament to deliberate on the affairs of the nation? We have lately seen, even during the sitting of Parliament and in the metropolis itself, armed men lining the streets for armed men going in fastidious show to the Pantheon of Divinities, the Rotunda. Shall we submit to that? I ask every man who regards that free constitution established by the blood of our fathers, is such an infringement to be suffered? If one step more is advanced it will be too late to retreat. If you have slept it is high time to awake."

To the spurious patriotism of this appeal Flood made a magnificent reply. It was, probably, the speech of his life. At the close he so aptly borrowed the fine conceit of Shakespeare's Hotspur, " I will have a starling taught to speak nothing but Mortimer," that the image is often quoted as his own.

" We have brought in our Bill," he said, " as members of this House, never mentioning the Volunteers. I ask you to receive it from us, from us, your members, neither intending by anything within doors or without doors to overawe you. I ask you, will you receive it as our Bill or will you conjure up a phantom of military dictation to affright

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G. Stuart.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

JOHN FOSTER.

From a mezzotint by G. Hodges in the National Gallery, Ireland.

Irish House of Commons in background.

[*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

HENRY FLOOD.

Engraving forming frontispiece to "Letters to Henry Flood," published 1820, *from an old miniature.*

yourselves? I have not introduced the Volunteers, but if the Volunteers are aspersed I will defend their conduct against the world. By whom were the commerce and the constitution of this country recovered? By the Volunteers. Why did not the honourable gentleman make a declaration against them when they lined our streets, when Parliament passed through ranks of those virtuous armed citizens to demand the rights of an insulted nation? Are they different men at this day or is he different? He was then one of their body, he is now their accuser. What has changed them since that time? Are they less brave, less wise, less ardent in their country's cause, or has their admirable conduct made him their foe? He cannot now bear the name of Volunteers, but I will ask him repeatedly, I will have a starling taught to hallo it in his ear: 'Who got you Free Trade? Who got you a free constitution? Who made Ireland a nation? The Volunteers!'"

It was all in vain. By the overwhelming majority of one hundred and fifty-seven to seventy-seven Flood was refused permission to even bring in his Bill, and the following motion was carried as a direct challenge to the Volunteers: "That it has now become indispensably necessary to declare that the House will maintain its just rights and privileges against all encroachments whatever." This motion, so insulting to the Volunteers, to whose support he was indebted for his triumphs, was, it appears, from the grateful letter of the Viceroy, supported by Grattan. *Tantæ ne animis cœlestibus iræ?*

When the news of the defeat and the humiliation was conveyed to the Volunteers it is possible they would have taught a useful lesson to the contumacious Parliament if they had had a leader who could rise to the occasion. But the feeble and frightened Lord Charlemont at once proceeded to engineer an ignominious surrender. He called to order a too daring delegate who ventured to protest against their treatment by Parliament and moved and carried an indefinite adjournment.

Exeunt the Irish Volunteers, and with them all hope of the reform or the stability of Grattan's Parliament.

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CHAPTER XVIII

AN INCONGRUOUS CONSTITUTION

Reform again rejected—Catholics still excluded—Grattan's appeal—Sir Arthur Wellesley's opposition—Lord Clare's brutal candour—Lord Macaulay's able exposition—The Portuguese imbroglio—A war suggested—The King of Ireland against the Ally of England — The Regency problem—The lesson it taught.

It would be quite foreign to the purpose of this book to record in detail the further proceedings of the Irish House of Commons from its first rejection of Reform to its final extinction in the Act of Union. It is the highest tribute to the principle of Home Rule that during the period of its existence the Irish Parliament, in spite of all its defects and limitations, contributed so splendidly to the prosperity of Ireland.

From first to last the Government relentlessly opposed Reform, which would have put an end to corruption. By lavish bribery it quickly secured a large dependent majority in the "Independent" House of Commons and could bid defiance to reformers.

Flood, to test the sincerity of the outcry against military dictation, reintroduced his Reform Bill

backed by petitions and resolutions from all parts of the country. It was rejected more ignominiously than before. Grattan's several proposals in favour of Catholic Emancipation met a similar fate. His eloquence was splendid as ever but it no longer had the menacing force of the Volunteers behind it.

"The question," he said, "is not whether we shall show mercy to the Roman Catholics but whether we shall mould the inhabitants of Ireland into a people, for so long as we exclude Catholics from national liberty and common rights of men we are not a people; we shall triumph over them but other nations shall triumph over us. If you love the Roman Catholic you may be sure of a return from him, but if you treat him with cruelty you must always live in fear, conscious that you merit his just resentment. Will you then go down the stream of time the Roman Catholic sitting by your side, unblessing and unblessed, blasting and blasted, or will you take off his chain that he may take off yours? Will you give him freedom that he may guard your liberty? . . .

"Bigotry," he declared, "may survive persecution, but it never can survive toleration. But gentlemen who speak of the enormities committed by Catholics groaning under a system of penal laws do not take into account the enlightening and softening of men's minds by toleration, nor do they consider that as they increase in wealth they will increase in learning and politeness.

"I give my consent to the clause in its principle, extent, and boldness. I give my consent to it as

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[*Photo Emery Walker.*

JOSEPH ADDISON.

From an old copy of a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Thomas Gainsborough, R.A.] [*Photo Emery Walker.*

EARL CORNWALLIS.

In the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Count D'Orsay.] [*Photo Emery Walker.*

DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

In the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Comerford. [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

EDWARD COOKE.

An engraving by Heath.

the most likely means of obtaining a victory over the prejudices of Catholics and over our own; I give my consent to it because I would not keep two millions of my fellow-subjects in a state of slavery, and because as the mover of the Declaration of Rights I would be ashamed of giving freedom to but six hundred thousand of my countrymen when I could extend it to two millions more."

The appeal was wholly in vain. Grattan without the Volunteers could no longer cope with the corrupt cohorts of the Government, and Emancipation was rejected even more decisively than Reform.

It is true that in 1793 the Government which had resisted a more moderate measure the year before passed an Act admitting Catholics to the forty shilling freehold franchise, which was afterwards sacrificed by O'Connell. This concession was worthless at the time it was made. Only in a small proportion of the constituencies was there any voting at all, and in those the Catholic electors were under the absolute control of their Protestant landlords.

An amendment to admit Catholics to membership of Parliament was proposed by George Knox, seconded by Major Doyle, supported by Grattan, vigorously resisted by the Government, and signally defeated by a majority of one hundred and sixty-three to sixty-nine. It is interesting to remember that young Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterwards Duke of Wellington, was on that occasion the spokesman

of bigotry. Half a century later he advised Emancipation as the only alternative to civil war.

"He had no objection," he said, "to giving Catholics the benefit of the constitution, and those the Bill in his opinion conferred in an ample degree. But the motion of the honourable gentleman seemed calculated to promote disunion. With the Bill as it stands the Protestants are satisfied and the Catholics are contented. Why then agitate a question which may disturb both?"

If the Irish Government under the direction of the English Cabinet steadily resisted Reform and deliberately relied on corruption, their excuse must be found in the conviction that under the constitution of Grattan's Parliament it was their one hope of averting separation. It was recognised that should the two Parliaments, each absolute in its own country, come into serious collision "the golden link of the crown," as O'Connell loved to call it, was manifestly too weak to hold the countries together. That collision, as Macaulay pointed out in a speech of surpassing ability delivered in the English House of Commons in reply to Daniel O'Connell on the question of Repeal, could only be averted by corrupting the Irish representatives. "Sir," he said, "the reason there was not perpetual collision was, as we all know, that the Irish Parliament, though nominally independent, was generally kept in real dependence by the foulest corruption."

So much indeed was confessed by Lord Clare in a speech in 1787, in which there is already

a plain foreshadowing of the Union. He not merely admits but justifies corruption as the first necessity of government. "A majority of the Parliament of Great Britain," he said, "will defeat the minister of the day, but a majority of the Parliament of Ireland against the King's government goes directly to separate the kingdom from the British Crown. If it continues separation or war is the inevitable result, and it is vain to expect that as long as man continues to be a creature of passion and interest that he will not avail himself of the critical and difficult situation in which the executive Government must ever remain under its present constitution to demand the favours of the Crown, not as the reward of loyalty and service but as the stipulated price to be paid in advance for the discharge of a public duty."

The public duty was, of course, the support of the Government, and for this loyal service the Government was always ready to pay liberally in advance out of the treasury of the nation.

At a very early stage the two Parliaments were brought into collision by the Portugal imbroglio, which affords an apt illustration of the paradoxical relations then existing between England and Ireland.

By the commercial treaty of 1703 Portugal bound herself, in consideration of a deferential tax on her wine (a rebate of one-third as compared with France), to grant free entrance of all English woollen goods to her ports. Ireland was of course

compelled to grant the rebate, and equally of course derived no benefit from the bargain, her woollen export trade having been rigorously suppressed by the British Parliament.

But when Free Trade was secured Ireland naturally expected to have the advantages of the treaty with Portugal, which was the more important as other ports were shut against her by the continental wars in which England was then involved. But Portugal, instigated, it is believed, by England, refused the treaty advantages to Ireland.

In the journals of the Irish House of Commons, "Luna 29 Die Octobris 1781," there is the record of a "petition of a corporation of merchants or Guild of the Holy Trinity, Dublin," setting forth that "soon after the auspicious period which with great exultation was understood to have restored to the inhabitants of this kingdom their undoubted right of a Free Trade, traders of Dublin were induced to export goods of the manufacture of Ireland to the port of Lisbon, that the said goods on their arrival at Lisbon were immediately put under detention in the Custom House, and that by the latest advices the proprietors had the mortification to find that the property yet remained in that situation.

"That the petitioners were informed that this detention arose from the goods having been the manufacture of Ireland, which they have the fullest cause to believe that the goods of the like fabrics, the manufacture of Great Britain, do not meet with any difficulty in admission into Portugal."

As was subsequently stated by Sir Lucius O'Brien, the Irish goods were actually distributed among the beggars of Lisbon. No wonder the Guild of the Holy Trinity made urgent appeal to the Irish Parliament for redress. Sir Lucius O'Brien at once moved for a committee of inquiry in a very uncompromising speech.

He did not, he said, "like the business lying in the hands of a minister of a people who thought it their interest to restrain our trade. Much of our suffering was owing to the want of a proper navy to defend our trade. We could have no benefit from a commerce till one was established; till then every paltry, petty maritime State would presume to insult us."

Mr. Forbes broadly hinted that the exclusion was the work of English jealousy. "When I find," he said, "that the Portuguese, against their interest, refuse to trade with Ireland, I must suspect something at bottom, especially when the Court of Portugal is in the greatest amity with the Court of Great Britain."

It can easily be understood that such language was most unpalatable to the Irish ministers (most of them Englishmen), who took their orders directly from England. "The English Government," as Lecky confesses, "feared to alienate Portugal at a time when the greater part of Europe was actively hostile, and it was extremely anxious to prevent the Irish Parliament dealing with the question, both because rash words might sow enmity between England and Portugal and also because the inter-

ference of the Irish Parliament in Imperial treaties would be a very dangerous precedent."

No wonder, then, that the Anglo-Irish Chief Secretary of the Lord-Lieutenant, Mr. Eden, opposed Sir Lucius O'Brien's strong resolution with a procrastinating proposal that "the matter should be left to the negotiation of the English ministers who had the best interests of Ireland so cordially at heart."

He was shocked at the suggestion that Irish Free Trade was not the spontaneous outcome of British magnanimity.

"One gentleman," he complained with unction, "has said that Ireland has extorted Free Trade from England. This I deny; it was not so. There can be no rape when the party is willing. . . . England gave Free Trade," he declared, "because the enlightened policy of modern times had convinced her legislature that it was just and wise to do it." The Irish Volunteers, of course, had nothing whatever to do with the concession.

Mr. Eden was, if possible, still more shocked at the idea that the fair-minded traders of Great Britain could be guilty of any ungenerous commercial rivalry. "The other honourable gentleman," he said, "was pleased to attribute the present interruption of our trade to the influence of some cabal amongst the British merchants. He knows little of the liberal spirit which in this age characterises the British merchants. Some of them would smile at the aspersion, others would feel indignant at it, but they would in general lament it."

Remembering the suppression of the Irish woollen trade by British Parliaments at the instigation of the "liberal" British merchants, there is an audacity about this Pecksniffian declaration that challenges amazement.

Grattan succeeded the Chief Secretary with a pungent criticism of "the minister who had himself opposed Free Trade and was the exclusive champion of British merchants who, from the Revolution to the present day, were uniformly contending for a monopoly in favour of England."

But the most remarkable passage in Grattan's speech was the suggestion that the "King of Ireland" should undertake a war against Portugal, the friend and ally of England. "Though the crown of Ireland," he declared, "was inseparably annexed to the crown of England, yet the King of England had no right to rob the King of Ireland of the brightest jewel in his crown (the commerce of the realm) to embellish the diadem of England."

The resolution of Sir Lucius was negatived by a majority of one hundred and seventeen to forty-four, and the question was let slide till the February of the following year, when a feeble and adulatory Address to the Crown was proposed by the Government, and in reply an independent Irish war was again forcibly suggested by Sir Lucius O'Brien.

"For my part," he said, "I do not think the Address proposed contains sufficient spirit; there is a languor and a timidity that crouches under insult." He thereupon proposed an Address of his

own, calling on "the King of Ireland to do the nation justice," and declaring "this nation has vigour and resources sufficient to maintain her rights and astonish all her enemies."

Grattan followed in the same spirit. "The Address," he declared, "is languid, spiritless, and ineffective, and in one part where it speaks of the prosperity of our trade it is a vile coquetry with the Crown. The idea of redressing ourselves by war has been turned into ridicule. How then shall we proceed when negotiation has proved ineffectual?"

There is something of Gilbert's whimsicality in Grattan's grave suggestion that the King of Ireland was bound to protect the trade of Ireland against the King of England and her allies, if necessary by war. The inimitable pluralist, Pooh Bah, in the "Mikado," is bewildered by the inconsistent duties of his various offices.

"Of course," he replies to the insistent Lord High Executioner, "as First Lord of the Treasury I could propose a special vote that would cover all expenses were it not that as leader of the Opposition it would be my duty to resist it tooth and nail, or as Paymaster-General I could so cook the accounts that as Lord High Auditor I should never discover the fraud, but then as Archbishop of Titipu it would be my duty to denounce my dishonesty and give myself into my own custody as Chief Commissioner of the Police."

The royal Pooh Bah, George III. of England and Ireland, would have found himself in an equally

embarrassing position if he had adopted the suggestion of Grattan.

As King of Ireland, bound to defend the brightest jewel in her crown, " he would have gone to war with Portugal, the ally of England. But as King of England he would have to take up arms on behalf of her ally. When the rival armies of England and Ireland met in the field he would be the official leader of both the opposing forces, bound as King of England to secure the English victory and as King of Ireland to secure an English defeat. If in the course of campaign the King of England resolved on an Irish invasion it would be the plain duty of the King of Ireland to repel the English invaders. These manifest absurdities were all the logical outcome of an absurd constitution.

On this occasion they were evaded by an adroit minister and a servile majority. " The feeble and adulatory Address " was carried in the Irish House and no more was heard of the matter.

It was unhappily reserved for Grattan to prove that corruption could not be always and absolutely relied on to prevent collision and by his action to force the consideration of a Union on the English Prime Minister. His conflict with the Government had no relation to any question in which the freedom or prosperity of Ireland was even remotely concerned.

In the year 1788 George III. fell sick or went mad ; historians differ on the point, but it is quite certain that he could no longer discharge even the ornamental duties of king. The Prince of Wales,

afterwards George IV., was chosen Regent by the British Parliament under the leadership of Pitt. But Pitt and the Tory majority, mistrusting the Regent, imposed various restrictions on the Regency. Fox, as leader of the Liberals and partisan of the Prince, demanded for him full royal authority.

The question mattered not one pin's point to Ireland. She was no more concerned than the weeping player in Hamlet with the misfortunes of Hecuba. The Regent, either as Prince of Wales or as sovereign, was not a personage to awaken enthusiasm or sympathy. Whether he had or not a right to create unlimited peers was certainly not a topic of vital interest to Ireland.

But Grattan, influenced, no doubt, by his great personal friendship for Fox, took up the question with a vehemence all his own. In defiance of the Government he carried an Address of the Irish Parliament offering an unrestricted sovereignty to the Regent, who was graciously pleased to accept it.

An acute crisis was thus created between the two countries. The Regency of Ireland was declared to be distinct from the Regency of England: the golden link of the crown was broken.

"Suppose," said Macaulay, "no extravagant supposition—suppose that George III. had not recovered, that the rest of his long life had been spent in seclusion, Great Britain and Ireland would have been during thirty-two years as completely separated as Great Britain and Spain. There would

have been nothing in common between the Governments, neither executive power nor legislative power."

This was a contingency that British statesmen could not contemplate with patience. The crisis, indeed, passed with the immediate recovery of the King. But it is plain that from that time Pitt determined the only permanent solution of a dangerous situation was to be found in a legislative Union.

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CHAPTER XIX

CORRUPTION AND COERCION

Dragooning the country—Grattan's protest—Lord Edward FitzGerald—A startling interruption—An unsatisfactory apology—An intolerant minority—Grattan's final appeal—The Government's contemptuous rejection—In despair he abandons his own Parliament.

THE Anglo-Irish Government speedily found it necessary to resort to a system of coercion to support their corruption and to dragoon the people as they had purchased the Parliament.

A series of Coercion Acts were devised, mainly to extinguish the last vestige of the power of the Volunteers, break up the constitutional organisation, and drive the more fiery spirits into the ranks of the disaffected, to be dealt with in a summary fashion.

To those Acts Grattan offered an uncompromising opposition, and it is interesting to note among the small and fluctuating minority that backed him to the uttermost the name of Lord Edward FitzGerald is invariably found.

On one memorable occasion Lord Edward's enthusiasm broke forth into open defiance. An

Address to the Lord-Lieutenant was before the House approving of his proclamation of a meeting of the Volunteers and pledging the House to support cordially, such measures as might be necessary, to bring it into effect.

Grattan strenuously opposed the measure, but the most startling opposition came from Lord Edward FitzGerald, who suddenly exclaimed—

"Sir, I give my most hearty disapprobation to this Address, for I do think that the Lord-Lieutenant and the majority of this House are the worst subjects that the King has."

Loud cries of "To the Bar!" "Take down his words!" were instantly heard from the crowded benches. The House was cleared on the instant, and three hours elapsed before strangers were readmitted. But the proceedings were subsequently made public. Neither threats nor persuasion could draw from the young patriot withdrawal, much less apology.

He laughed in the face of the furious partisans of the Government. "I am accused," he said, "of having declared the Lord-Lieutenant and the majority of this House are the worst subjects the King has. I said so. It is true and I am sorry for it."

The explanation, very naturally, was not accepted by the majority of the House and it was resolved that "the excuse offered by the Right Hon. Edward FitzGerald, commonly called Lord Edward FitzGerald, for the said words so spoken is unsatisfactory and insufficient," and an order made

" that the said Edward FitzGerald do attend the Bar of the House to-morrow."

Next morning he was brought in custody to the Bar, unconcerned and resolute as ever, and he smilingly repeated his " insufficient apology." But the night had brought cooler counsel to the Government, and this time his " apology " was accepted with only a minority of fifty-nine protesting.

The next week he stood up again almost alone in the House to protest against the system of Coercion.

So the Irish Parliament moved steadily on to its own destruction. Over and over again Grattan made eloquent appeals on behalf of the Catholic outlaws, always in vain.

" The bankrupt," he said, " can sit in Parliament and tax the Catholic though he cannot so easily tax himself. The persons who voted that the Parliament of another country could make laws for Ireland can sit in Parliament ; they may legislate for that body whose rights they would have surrendered. The persons who voted that the Privy Councils of both countries might interfere in your legislation may sit in Parliament and preside over the very proceedings they betrayed. The man who bought your peerages, the man who sold your privileges may be your Viceroy, he was your Viceroy. In short, Deism, Atheism, profligacy, and penury may sit in Parliament, which is left open to every imaginable crime by your laws and studiously corrupted by your ministers."

But the corrupt and intolerant majority of the

House again shut the gates of the constitution with a clang against three millions of people and so hastened the downfall of their own liberty. There was a wholesome truth in Moore's pungent lines :—

> "So long as millions shall kneel down
> And ask of thousands for their own,
> So long as thousands turn away
> And to the millions answer nay,
> So long the merry reign must be
> Of job and bribe and slavery."

The Parliament that refused liberty to the majority of the people a little later was unable to protect its own. The climax came when Grattan was obliged to abandon as hopeless the House of Commons which he had himself created.

On May 15, 1797, a memorable day for the Irish Parliament, Mr. Ponsonby moved his Bill for Reform and Catholic Emancipation combined. It proposed that Catholics should be admitted to Parliament and all great offices of State, that the whole country should be divided into elective districts, each containing six thousand houses, and that two members should be elected for each district on what was then a liberal franchise.

The adoption of the Bill was known to be the only alternative to rebellion, the menacing rumble of which was already heard. But the Government did not desire to avert the rebellion, which they regarded as a serviceable preliminary to the Union. So they violently opposed the Bill.

As an excuse for opposing it they availed themselves of the dishonest pretence that has served

the purpose of oppression and coercion so often before and since. "It would be cowardly," they protested, "to yield anything to intimidation. Tranquillity must be restored before justice could be conceded."

To this pretence Curran made eloquent reply. "He knew no cowardice," he declared, "so despicable as the fear of seeming to be afraid. To fear danger was not an unnatural sensation, but to be brave in absurdity and injustice merely from the fear of having your sense and honesty imputed to cowardice was a stretch of folly which he had never heard of before."

Grattan closed the debate in a powerful appeal, but from his peroration it was plain that he had lost all faith in the Parliament which he had hailed so triumphantly just fifteen years before.

"The Government," he said, "regards or affects to regard Catholic Emancipation and Reform as pretexts for separation. 'You must subdue,' you say, 'before you reform.' Alas, you think so, but you forget you subdue by reforming. It is the best conquest you can obtain over your own people. But let us suppose you succeed, what is your success? A military Government, a perfect despotism, a union. But what may be the ultimate consequence of such a history? A separation. Your system is perilous indeed. I hope I am mistaken, at least I hope I exaggerate. I cannot, however, banish from my memory the lesson of the American War, and yet at that time the English Government was at the head of Europe and was

Sir T. Lawrence, P.R.A.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN.

From a picture formerly in the collection of Sir Robert Peel, now in the National Gallery of Ireland.

Richard Rothwell, R.H.A.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

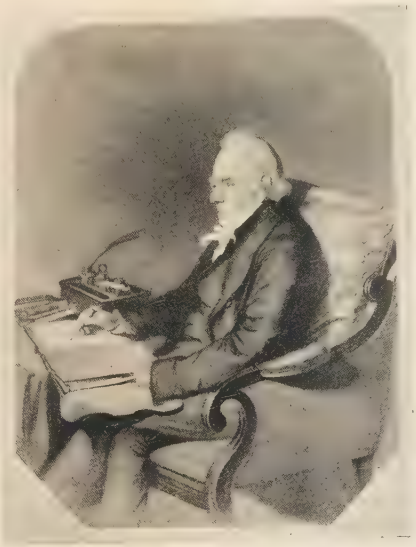
WILLIAM CONYNGHAM PLUNKET.

A mixed engraving by David Lucas in the National Gallery of Ireland.

A. Hope.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

GEORGE PONSONBY.

A stipple engraving by F. Godly, in the National Gallery of Ireland.



W. Stevenson.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

CHARLES KENDAL BUSHE.

A mixed mezzotint by D. Lucas in the National Gallery of Ireland.

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possessed of resources comparatively unbroken. If that measure has no effect on ministers surely I can suggest nothing that will. We have offered you our measure, you will reject it. We depreciate yours, you will persevere. Having no hopes left to persuade or dissuade and having discharged our duty we will trouble you no more, and after this day shall not attend the House of Commons."

The Bill was rejected by the overwhelming majority of one hundred and seventy to thirty. Grattan fulfilled his threat. He and his friends retired in a body from the House and at the dissolution they refused re-election. The triumph of corruption was complete, the Government was left wholly untrammelled to its own devices: the Union was inevitable.

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CHAPTER XX

PITT'S POLICY. THE UNION

Ireland's protest—A serviceable triumvirate—Castlereagh, Clare, and Cooke—The first shot in the campaign—Pamphlet by Cooke—Witty rejoinder by Bushe—"Stop your Funning, or the Rebel Detected"—"The Union will be the salvation of the country"—Meeting of the Bar—Overwhelming majority against the Union—Its supporters promoted—Its opponents dismissed.

MANY tempting topics must be dismissed with a word. The appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam to the Viceroyalty, his promise of Catholic Emancipation, and his abrupt recall when he seemed on the point of uniting and tranquillising all classes of the people; the urgency with which the rebellion of '98 was provoked and the savagery with which it was suppressed were all part of Pitt's relentless policy for the establishment of a legislative Union.

The project of the Union had preceded the Declaration of Independence and survived it. While the Irish Parliament was still bound hand and foot in the trammels of Poynings' Law, a mere appendage of the British Cabinet, the mere hint of its threatened extinction sufficed to drive the people to a frenzy. In Gilbert's "History of Dublin" we

read that so far back as the December of 1759 the vague rumour of a Union produced a riot in Dublin.

"The people rose in all parts of Dublin, and possessing themselves of the avenues to the Parliament House, laid hands upon the members, obliging them to take an oath to be true to Ireland and to vote against a Union. Rowley, a rich Presbyterian, supposed to be a promoter of the Union, was seized, stripped, and threatened with drowning. They pulled off Lord Inchiquin's periwig and red ribbon; on his stuttering when the oath was put to him, they cried: 'Damn you! why do you hesitate?' but on hearing that his name was O'Brien their rage was changed to acclamations. The English Bishop of Killala and John Bowes, the English Lord Chancellor of Ireland, were dragged from their coaches and obliged to take the oath; but the mob being struck with the idea that their administration of it might not be considered binding, they stopped the Chief Justice and made the Chancellor renew the oath in his presence.

"Although Anthony Malone took the engagement, the people were so disgusted at his having lapsed from a 'Patriot' leader into a Government pensioner that one of the ringleaders dipped his fist in the channel before he would shake hands with him. Sir Thomas Prendergast, one of a family long in bad odour with the native Irish, being caught looking out from the House of Lords, was pulled forth by the nose and rolled in the kennel. As a practical satire on the political imbecility of the peers, they placed an old woman with a clay pipe

in her mouth on the throne of the House of Lords."

Pitt had, therefore, a desperate task in hand to extinguish Grattan's Parliament, nominally at least coequal to the Parliament of England, but he set himself resolutely to a policy which he believed to be the only alternative to separation.

At the close of the year 1798, when the rebellion had been quenched in blood and the country was feeble, breathless, and exhausted, he thought the moment favourable to force the Union on the Irish people, and he found instruments ready to his hand in Lord Castlereagh, the newly-appointed Chief Secretary; Lord Clare, the newly-appointed Lord Chancellor; and Edward Cooke, the Under-Secretary of the Castle—a triumvirate whom Grattan immortalised in a sentence.

"The minister," he said, "has destroyed the constitution. To destroy is easy. The edifices of the mind, like the fabrics of marble, require an age to build but ask only minutes to precipitate, and as the fall of both is an effort of no time so neither is it the business of strength. A pickaxe and a common labourer will do the one, a little lawyer, a little pimp, and a wicked minister the other."

The three men were as effective a combination as could be found for the work that Pitt had in hand.

Young, handsome, and of charming manner, Lord Castlereagh was endowed with an irresistible obstinacy of character and a total disregard of

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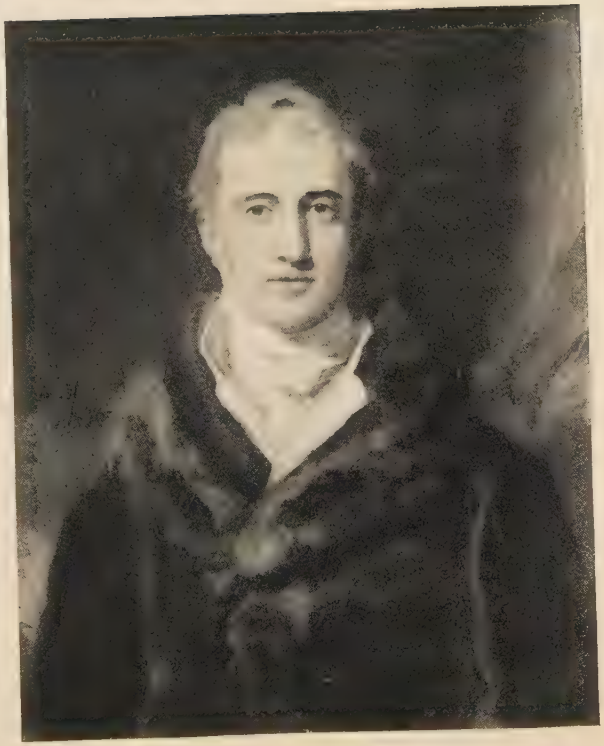
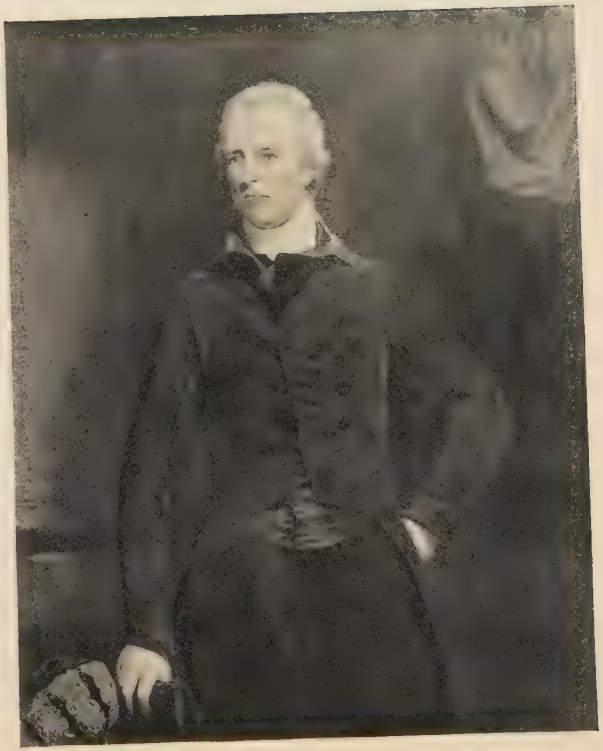


Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.] [*Photo Emery Walker.*

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH.

In the National Gallery, London.



John Hoppner, R.A.] [*Photo Emery Walker.*

WILLIAM PITT.

In the National Portrait Gallery, London.

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means and consequences in securing his ends. He has been compared to Mr. Balfour amongst modern statesmen, and the comparison is justified by the personal fascination which both exercised on their followers, but it is unjust to Mr. Balfour. His Irish administration showed that he could be unscrupulous for a spurt, but he lacked the stubborn determination of Lord Castlereagh ; he quickly tired of Coercion, and he was capable of kindness and generosity. Lord Castlereagh let no human feeling turn him a hair's breadth from his purpose ; he applauded what he knew to be vile, he denounced what he knew to be noble ; he seems to have been incapable alike of enmity and friendship. Plunket and he exchanged the most savage invective in the Union debates. " A green and sapless twig " Plunket described him, with a bitter personal sting in the words. Castlereagh retorted with equal violence, yet he was, when it served his purpose, the patron of Plunket in the British Parliament.

A few days after Castlereagh's suicide, Plunket wrote : " His friendship and confidences were the prime causes which induced his Majesty's Government to desire my services." The alliance was not creditable to either.

Amongst his contemporaries there was no man so bitterly assailed as Castlereagh. His courage was undoubted, yet he got no credit for his courage.

> " Fearless because no feeling dwells in ice,
> His very courage stagnates to a vice."

Byron wrote of him as " dabbling his sleek young

hands in Erin's gore" and commemorated his suicide with a savage couplet:—

> "Lord Castlereagh has cut his throat. Just so
> He cut his country's throat some years ago."

Of a wholly different character was Lord Castlereagh's great coadjutor, Lord Clare. He is described as a small dark man with fierce, flashing dark eyes. To the populace, who hated him, he was known as "Black Jack." Arrogance was the master note in his character. He loved personal display and stopped at no extravagance for its gratification. His coach, it is said, cost the incredible price of six thousand pounds. Warm in friendship, relentless in enmity, incapable either of fear or shame, like an elephant in a jungle he crashed his way over all obstacles to his purpose.

The Union was no new project with Lord Clare; he early conceived the idea and never abandoned it. It is mentioned in Grattan's Life by his son that in Lord Townsend's Viceroyalty a dinner was given at a certain Mr. Hogart's to commemorate some temporary triumph of the Patriot Party. Fitzgibbon was especially vehement in his patriotism on the occasion. "Who dares to talk of a Union now?" he exclaimed. "If any man were to propose it to me I would fling my office in his face!"

Denis Daly, when Fitzgibbon had left the room, quietly remarked, "That little man who talked so big just now would vote for a Union. Aye, tomorrow."

A terrible picture of Lord Clare was drawn by

Yelverton in reply to an attack made upon Grattan during his absence from the House of Commons. "The learned gentleman," he said, "has stated what Mr. Grattan is, I will state what he is not. He is not styed in his prejudices, he does not trample on the resuscitation of his country or live like a caterpillar on the decline of her prosperity. He does not stickle for the letter of the constitution with the affectation of a prude and abandon its principles with the effrontery of a prostitute."

In Edward Cooke was found precisely the man needed to complete this formidable triumvirate. If Lord Castlereagh started with any of the warm aspirations of youth they must have been frozen in his heart by his association with Cooke. Cold, keen, and cynical, with no belief in human virtue, a past master of intricate intrigue, he not merely did the dirty work of the Union, but did it rejoicingly, with indomitable energy, audacity, and shamelessness.

The first shot in the Union campaign was fired by Cooke in a pamphlet entitled "Arguments For and Against a Union of Great Britain with Ireland Considered." Everything in favour of the Union and nothing against it was urged in the pamphlet. The author's ingenuity was sorely strained to make a plausible case. The most extraordinary arguments were pressed into his service. The superiority of England was urged as a conclusive reason. Ireland, he wrote, "as her inferior in point of civilisation, agriculture, commerce, manufacture, morals, and manners, would be kept in

a state of continual emulation and improvement by a Union. . . . The most sanguine Irish patriot could not hope that his country could attain the same fame as England. . . . If any person," concluded Cooke, " had a son uneducated, unimproved, and injured by bad habits and bad company, in order to remedy those imperfections, would it not be his best endeavour to enter into the most virtuous, the most polished, and the most learned company? "

The Union was recommended to the loyal because it would prevent the danger of a landing on the Irish coast. The Protestants were threatened with Catholic Emancipation if it did not pass, the Catholics were flattered with the hope of Emancipation if it did. The Protestants were told: " You are now in a minority of one to three in Ireland, but after the Union you will count as Englishmen and you will be in a majority of fourteen to three in the United Kingdom." Most curious of all was the suggestion that the advantages that England derived from a resident sovereign was a reason for Ireland abandoning her resident Parliament.

The first shot was probably intended to draw the fire of the enemy, to ascertain their position and force. There was a regular broadside in reply. Over a hundred pamphlets in all were published on the subject. In the admirably conducted National Library, Dublin, there are eight great volumes of bound pamphlets called " Union Tracts," almost all directed against the measure.

Perhaps the ablest of them all, certainly the wittiest, is a reply to Cooke entitled " Stop your

Funning, or The Rebel Detected," which was published anonymously, but which is now known to have been written by the Right Hon. Kendal Bushe, and is in all respects worthy of his reputation.

Bushe affects to regard Cooke's pamphlet as a piece of elaborate irony, like Swift's "Modest Proposal," designed under a pretended advocacy to bring into hatred, ridicule, and contempt the glorious Union designed for "the salvation of the country."

"The author," he declares, "must be a rebel intent on separation who hides behind the honoured name of Mr. Secretary Cooke." The satire is most ingeniously worked out to the end.

Abundant ridicule is heaped on Cooke's extraordinary contention that the surrender of a resident Parliament would nullify the disadvantage of an absentee sovereign. He is accused of attempting by such absurdities to injure the prospect of the Union ("which will be the salvation of the country"). "English influence at present predominates" writes Bushe, "but this rebel suggests that the transportation of our legislature will remedy the evil and that power and consequence and government will revert into Irish channels. He knew that such an inference could not be swallowed by any man at the outside of Swift's Hospital, and thus, in fact, wounds the cause by an affectation of defending it."

Bushe professes himself amused at the suggestion of England's vast superiority in virtue and

morals and the prospect of Ireland's improvement by her closer company. "This I admit," he writes, "to be witty, irresistibly amusing. No gravity can stand the idea of old Ireland going to school to England," but he strongly deprecates such levity as throwing ridicule on the Union. "The real argument in support of it," he writes, "stands upon a rock and none but cloven-footed traitors would pretend that there is any other—that it certainly will be the salvation of the country."

Cooke is condemned in the character of a rebel for pretending that the Union will prevent a French invasion of Ireland. "Now we all know," writes Bushe, "though a Union will certainly be the salvation of the nation it is impossible that a new modification of a moral relation can produce any change in the physical position of the country. Under every possible mode of connection the coast line must remain in the same geographical position as to France."

The inducements offered to Catholics to support the Union in hope of Emancipation and the Protestants to support it from fear of Emancipation are admirably dealt with. "A gang of swindlers in London, a place notorious for such gentry, hired an alley which communicated from one public street to another. At each end stood one of the gang and vociferated: 'Walk in to the auction! Great bargains! Walk in to the auction!' The deluded passengers who were quietly going the broad way to St. Paul's Cathedral listened to the voice of the charmer and slipped in, while at the other side the equally deluded crowd going through

Ave Maria Lane did the same. What was the consequence? They knocked their heads together in the dark, and the remainder of the robbers picked the pockets of both."

Finally Bushe insists that this rebel's cowardly attack on the Union must be punished and that the first motion of the United Imperial Parliament may be that his Majesty's Attorney-General, the Right Hon. John Toler or Captain Taylor, the Lord-Lieutenant's aide-de-camp, may be authorised to prosecute the author, printer, and publisher of the said libel by indictment, information, or court martial, as the circumstances of the case may require."

Lord Clare arrogantly assumed that his influence over the Irish Bar would force the Union on the acceptance of the profession, which numbered among its members so many able and active politicians. He was speedily shown his mistake. At a meeting of the Bar held in the Exhibition Room, William Street, presided over by the father, the scheme was for the first time publicly discussed and the majority against the Union was one hundred and sixty-six to thirty-two.

The opening speaker in favour of the Union was a briefless barrister, Mr. St. John Daly; he was followed by Mr. Thomas O'Grady, better known as an amatory poet than as a lawyer, who had secured the Lord Chancellor's favour by a poem with the quaint title of "The Flesh Brush," dedicated to Lady Clare, and who was on the look out for preferment. The third was Lord Clare's nephew and purse-bearer, who afterwards became a parson

and ultimately blossomed into a peer with the title of Lord Decies.

The arguments of the pro-Unionists that have reached us were absolutely puerile. "Shall I visit posterity with war, pestilence, and famine?" cried Mr. O'Grady. "No, no; give me a Union!"

Plunket was the chief spokesman of the patriots. From the brief summary of the published edition of his speeches he seems to have been in a despondent mood on that occasion. While he denounced the proposal he was convinced that "should the administration propose a Union now they would carry it. Fear, animosity, a want of time to coolly consider its consequences, and forty thousand British troops in Ireland would carry it." But Mr. Goold closed the debate in a bolder strain.

"There are," he said, "forty thousand British troops in Ireland, and with forty thousand bayonets at my breast I should protest. The minister shall not plant another Sicily in the bosom of the Atlantic. I want not the assistance of divine inspiration to foretell, for I am enabled by the visible and unerring demonstrations of nature to assert that Ireland was destined to be a free and independent nation. Our patent to be a State, not a shire, comes direct from heaven. The Almighty has in majestic characters signed the great charter of our independence. The great Creator of the world has given our beloved country the gigantic outlines of a kingdom. The God of nature never intended that Ireland should be a province, and by God she never shall."

This declaration, we read, was received with a

burst of applause. The sedate lawyers repeated the oath in a tumultuous chorus. But the little minority, faithless alone among the faithful found, though defeated were rewarded. From the list published by Sir Jonah Barrington it appears that every man of them was provided with a job ranging from £500 to £5,000 a year. Seven of them were made judges of the High Court at a salary of £3,300, and two of them Commissioners of Value at a salary of £5,000 a year. The sum total distributed amongst those zealous, disinterested advocates of the Union was well over £50,000 a year. On the other hand, the lawyers who opposed it were promptly deprived of every place which the Government could control and were shut out from all hope of promotion.

The Right Hon. James Fitzgerald, who refused to support the Union, was dismissed from the high position of Prime Sergeant, and the briefless barrister, Mr. St. John Daly, appointed in his room. The Prime Sergeant, by virtue of his office (an office unknown in England), was official leader of the Irish Bar. He ranked before the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General, and his salary was greater than either. Mr. St. John Daly's sole qualification for the position was the support of the Union. The Bar desired that Fitzgerald should retain his precedence, but Lord Clare violently and successfully protested against any privilege being accorded to unpurchasable patriotism.

The whole proceeding was a fit inauguration of the reckless and shameless corruption by which the Union was ultimately carried.

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CHAPTER XXI

THE FIRST PITCHED BATTLE

The Lord-Lieutenant's address in favour of Union—Ponsonby's amendment—Speeches on both sides—Brilliant advent of Plunket—Convicts the Government of corruption—Denies the power of Parliament to enslave the people—The "solid" arguments of Castlereagh—A fox run to earth—A public purchase—The Government's majority of one.

THE Government having mobilised its troops, rewarding corrupt partisans and dismissing honest opponents, thought in the first month of 1799 the moment was ripe for an attack in force in the Irish House of Commons.

"At this juncture," writes Gilbert, "the people were distracted by domestic dissensions and panic-stricken at the results of the recent civil war. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended and courts martial were sitting in various parts of the kingdom, which was covered in troops exceeding in number one hundred and thirty-seven thousand men."

The speech from the throne at the opening of the session on January 22, 1799, was a direct challenge to the champions of the Irish Parliament. After a long preamble it declared the sovereign's

considerate desire for " some permanent adjustment which may extend the advantages enjoyed by our sister kingdom to every part of the island, and would, at the same time when the King's enemies were conspiring to effect a separation, provide the most effectual way of maintaining and consolidating the British Empire."

There are very scanty official records of the animated debate that ensued. In the " Irish Parliamentary Register " the matter is dismissed with the briefest notice. " The measure of the Union," it writes, " being brought forward was this session rejected. We cannot enter minutely into a report of the debate "—it gives no report at all—" which would exceed our limits, as we will find it was again repeated in the session following, and the arguments for and against it were each time founded on much the same principles."

The " Register," however, finds space immediately after for one hundred and three pages of " the substance of Mr. William Smith's speech in favour of a legislative Union between this country and Great Britain."

But it has been found possible from various sources to compile a summary of the debate. Sir John Parnell, grandfather of John Stewart Parnell, who had just been dismissed from his high position as Chancellor of the Exchequer as a punishment for his opposition to the Union, took up the challenge in defence of the Irish Parliament, at whose destruction the speech from the throne was distinctly aimed.

Lord Castlereagh blandly explained that deliberation was only asked for, a vote for the Address did not mean a vote for the Union. Thereupon George Ponsonby, who, on the retirement of Grattan, had with general assent assumed the leadership of the Patriot Party, brought the matter to a direct issue by an amendment which insisted on retaining "the undoubted right to have a resident and independent legislation such as was recognised by the British legislation in 1782, and finally settled as the adjustment of all difficulties between the countries."

His speech stirred the Opposition to a frenzy of enthusiasm. A reply from the Government side was tame and ineffective. The chief speakers were Sir Boyle Roche, a buffoon whom the Government sometimes found useful; the Knight of Kerry, whom it is sad to find in that company; Mr. William Smith, a barrister in quest of promotion which he speedily secured; and Sir John Daly, who, as we have seen, had just been promoted to the position of Prime Sergeant. The Government ranks were plainly daunted by the force and fire of the Opposition; their speeches were in the minor key, cringing and apologetic.

But when Sir Jonah Barrington boldly denounced the unconstitutional means by which the Union was sought to be forced on the people, Castlereagh, whose audacity was unbounded and who doubtless desired to inspire his forces, in the most domineering fashion denied the charges, called Barrington to order, and threatened to have his words taken down.

This was the moment for the dramatic entrance on the scene of William Cunningham Plunket, then an almost unknown young barrister who afterwards shone so prominently in the Union debates. Addressing the Speaker, he declared the views of Sir Jonah Barrington were his and said when his time came he would express them more emphatically. Castlereagh did not press his objection and Barrington continued as he began.

The debate was protracted all through the night. Thirty members spoke in favour of the Union and forty-five against it. In the grey light of a winter's morning Plunket, a man of splendid presence, electrified the assembly into the fiercest enthusiasm.

He ridiculed the promises of Lord Castlereagh. "England," he declared, "would promise anything for the same reason that the unprincipled spendthrift would subscribe, without reading it, to the bond which he has no intention of ever discharging."

In fierce and daring terms he denounced the conduct of the Government.

"During the past six weeks," he said, "a system of black corruption has been carried on within the walls of the Castle which would disgrace the annals of the worst period of the history of either country. I see two right honourable members"—Sir John Parnell and James Fitzgerald—"sitting within those walls who long and faithfully served the Crown and have been dismissed because they dared to express a sentiment in favour of their country. I see another honourable gentleman who

has been forced to resign his place as Commissioner of the Revenue because he refused to co-operate in that dirty job of a dirty administration. Do they dare deny this? Every honest and independent man in Ireland will rally round the constitution and merge every other consideration in his opposition to this ungenerous and odious measure. For my own part I will resist it to the last gasp of my existence and with the last drop of my blood, and when I feel the hour of my dissolution approaching I will, like Hannibal's father, take my children to the altar and swear them to eternal hostility against the invaders of their country's freedom."

"I say," he continued, "that at this moment the threat of dismissal from office is suspended over the heads of members who now sit around me to influence their votes on the question of this night, involving everything that can be most sacred and dear to men. Do you desire to take down my words? Utter the desire and I will prove the truth of them at your Bar."

"Sir, I would warn you against the consequences of carrying this measure by such means but that I see the necessary defeat of it in the honest and universal indignation which the adoption of such means excites. In the most express manner I deny the competency of Parliament to do this act. I warn you, do not lay your hands on the constitution. I tell you that if, circumstanced as you are, you pass this Act it will be mere nullity and no man in Ireland will be bound to obey it. You

have not been elected for this purpose, you are appointed to make laws and not legislatures; you were appointed to exercise the functions of legislators, not to transfer them."

"Yourselves you may extinguish, but Parliament you cannot extinguish. It is enthroned in the hearts of the people, it is enshrined in the sanctity of the constitution, it is as immortal as the island which protects it. As well might the frantic suicide hope that the act which destroys his miserable body should extinguish his eternal soul."

Eloquence was for the time unavailing against the solid arguments that Lord Castlereagh could offer. The amendment was rejected by a majority of one.

Two dramatic incidents are narrated by Sir Jonah Barrington as illustrating how even that diminutive majority was obtained. A certain barrister named Mr. Luke Fox, who had professed himself an ardent Whig, in compliment, it was supposed, to his great English namesake, became a no less ardent Tory when he married Lord Ely's niece and was by him "introduced," as the phrase went, into Parliament. Lord Ely was at the time negotiating with the Government for the sale of his satellites, but he had not yet concluded his bargain and he had sent no direction to his retainer in the House of Commons, who in his doubt wandered from one side to another, hesitating which he should support.

When the doors were locked for a division he found himself, to his dismay, in the company of

the anti-Unionists and fled to a dark corridor. He was, however, discovered and dragged from his lair by the triumphant patriots, who insisted on his vote. As a last desperate device he declared on his honour that he had already accepted the Excheatorship of Munster (the Irish equivalent to Chiltern Hundreds), and therefore had ceased to be a member of Parliament. On subsequent investigation the statement was found to be false. The following day he was bought up by Lord Castlereagh and then, not before, accepted the Excheatorship.

It will be remembered that a somewhat similar incident occurred to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain when he fled from a division to the inner recesses of the lobby, and was made the subject of humorous comment by the Speaker.

Another member of Parliament was, towards the close of the first Union debate, openly purchased before the eyes of the outraged assembly. The thing would be incredible if it was not proved by a host of witnesses. It had best be told in the words of Sir Jonah Barrington, who was present on the occasion and describes the act as "the most palpable and undisguised tergiversation ever exhibited in a public assembly."

"It was suspected," he writes, "that Mr. French had been long in negotiation with Lord Castlereagh, but it did not in the early part of the night appear to have been brought to any conclusion, his conditions were supposed to be too extravagant. Mr. French, after some preliminary observations,

declared in a speech that he would vote against the minister and support Mr. Ponsonby's amendment.

"This appeared a stunning blow to Mr. Cooke, who had been previously in conversation with Mr. French. He was immediately observed sidling from his seat nearer to Castlereagh. They whispered earnestly, and as if restless and undecided both looked wistfully towards Mr. French. At last the matter seemed to be determined on.

"Mr. Cooke retired to a back seat and was obviously endeavouring to count the House, probably to guess if they could that night dispense with Mr. French's services. He returned to Lord Castlereagh, whispered, again looked most affectionately towards Mr. French, who seemed unconscious that he was the subject of their consideration.

"But there was no time to lose, the question was approaching; they decided on the terms, and a significant and certain glance, obvious to everybody, convinced Mr. French that his conditions were agreed to. Mr. Cooke then went and sat down by his side and an earnest but very short conversation took place; a parting smile immediately told the House that Mr. French was satisfied.

"These surmises were soon verified. Mr. Cooke went back to Lord Castlereagh, a congratulatory nod announced his satisfaction. But could any man for one moment suppose that a member of Parliament, a man of large fortune, respectable family and good character, could be publicly and without

shame or compunction actually seduced by Lord Castlereagh in the very body of the House and under the eye of two hundred and twenty gentlemen? Yet this was the fact. In a few minutes Mr. French rose to apologise for having indiscreetly declared he would support the amendment. He added that he had thought better of the subject since he had unguardedly expressed himself, that he was convinced that he was wrong and would support the minister."

For this service, in addition to other rewards, Mr. French was raised to the peerage under the title of Lord Ashtown. It is interesting to find the present Lord Ashtown is a violent opponent of Home Rule and was particularly indignant at the corruption of the Irish party by American dollars.

It was thus the Union majority of one was contrived. If Mr. Luke Fox had told the truth " on his honour " the numbers would have been equal and the vote of the Speaker, Foster, would have decided the issue against the Government. If the Government had not bid up to Mr. French's reserve price the Union would have been lost by a majority of two.

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CHAPTER XXII

THE UNION REJECTED

The Government renew the attack—Prolonged debate—Exciting division—"Bully" Egan damns Kilmainham—Majority of six against the Union—A critical moment—The nation's fate in the balance—Fatal folly—A retreat after victory—The rejoicing of the people—Triumphant procession of the Speaker—Lord Clare at his chariot wheel—A comical defiance—Firing on the people.

THE Government had counted on a substantial majority. The closeness of the division was regarded as a victory by the defeated and a defeat by the victorious. There was universal rejoicing in Dublin, and it was thought that in accordance with precedent the project would now be abandoned. The obstinacy with which the Government provoked another encounter soon dispelled that delusion.

A committee had been appointed to draw up an Address in reply to the speech from the throne; on the 24th of January it came up on report before the House. The interval was too brief for the arts of the seducer to prevail, and the Opposition were confident of success.

An enormous crowd collected on College Green.

The House itself, floor and galleries, was crowded to the doors. The Court dress and uniforms of the members, the brilliant costumes of the ladies gave a wonderful colour and animation to the scene.

The Address having recited that his Majesty "had condescended to invite the Parliaments of both countries to devise means for maintaining and improving the connection essential to their common security," declared "we shall not fail to give the fullest consideration to a communication of such momentous importance."

Mr. Ponsonby met the Government challenge with an amendment striking out this obnoxious clause and battle was joined in a debate of wonderful brilliancy and intense ferocity in which no man's character was spared.

Ponsonby led off with a bitter personal attack on Castlereagh, cool, deliberate, and scathing. Lord Castlereagh, assuming a passion he could not have felt, descended to the language of virulent abuse. The leaders of the Bar he described as "pettifoggers and caballers," "a desperate faction." The nation itself was accused of "barbarism, ignorance, and gross ingratitude to the protection and paternal regard she had ever experienced from England." "The ravings of an irritated youth" was Ponsonby's audible comment on the speech.

The debate grew every moment more violent. Mr. Egan, known as "Bully" Egan, to whom allusion has been already made, is described by an eye-

witness as "galloping like a dray horse over his opponents, plunging and kicking and overthrowing all before him; no member on that night delivered a more sincere, clumsy, and powerful oration."

Sir Niel O'Donnell, a colonel in a Mayo regiment, disclaimed all future allegiance if a Union was carried and swore he would resist at the head of his regiment "rebels in rich clothes as he had resisted rebels in rags." Next day he was dismissed.

Again and again, with a cynical audacity that almost challenged admiration, Lord Castlereagh denied the impeachment of corruption that was hurled against him by each succeeding speaker, and as if to emphasise the worth of his disclaimer Mr. French, who had so distinguished himself on the first debate, rose to explain, amid scornful laughter, that he had been fully convinced of the advantage of the Union, and was determined to support it. At length, after a continuous debate of over twenty hours, the question was put and the House divided.

Gradually it leaked out that the Opposition had won. The utmost effort could not gather more than one hundred and five into the Government lobby. Cheer after cheer rang out as that number was overtopped by the Opposition, one hundred and six, seven, eight, nine, ten!

"Bully" Egan was the last man in. "I'm one hundred and eleven!" he shouted in the voice of a stentor, bringing his stick down with a thud on the floor, "and damn Kilmainham!"

He was at the time Recorder of Dublin, with a court at Kilmainham. He was threatened with dismissal if he opposed the Union and promised promotion to the superior court bench if he supported it. Though a poor man he refused the bribe and repelled the threat. He was immortalised in a street ballad :—

> "For lack of honesty let none arraign him
> To save the nation he damned Kilmainham."

The Address was defeated by a majority of one hundred and eleven to one hundred and five. There were eighty-six members absent, the great majority of whom were opposed to the Union but were kept away by the fear or the favour of the Government.

The result was received with boundless enthusiasm. The crowd of ladies and gentlemen in the gallery could not restrain their delight, which found vent in loud applause. Lady Castlereagh, a woman of pre-eminent beauty who had waited so long for her husband's triumph, was overwhelmed by his defeat.

Now, indeed, the fate of the Union seemed sealed. On how small a thing the fortunes of a nation may depend ! Ponsonby, determined to utilise the hour of the Government's defeat while its supporters were still broken and crestfallen and his own followers triumphant, proceeded, as he fondly imagined, to emphasise the national victory and prevent any renewal of the attack.

Gathering his victorious followers round him he returned to the House. In a few words he con-

Hugh D. Hamilton.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

LORD CLARE.

In the National Gallery of Ireland.

J. Stephens.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

CHARLES TOTTENHAM.

An engraving in the National Gallery of Ireland.

Comerford.] [*Photo T. Geogheghan.*

JOHN EGAN.

An engraving by J. Heath after a miniature formerly in possession of Sir Jonah Barrington.

William Cuming, P.R.H.A.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

LORD CHARLEMONT.

In the National Gallery of Ireland.

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gratulated Parliament and the country on the honest and patriotic assertion of their liberties but declared that there could be no security against future attempts to overthrow their independence but by a direct and absolute declaration of the rights of Irishmen recorded upon their journals as the decided sense of the people through their Parliament. He therefore, without further preface, moved "that this House will ever maintain the undoubted birthright of Irishmen by preserving an independent Parliament of Lords and Commons resident in this kingdom as stated and approved of by his Majesty and the British Parliament in 1782."

Lord Castlereagh, thoroughly discomfited, contented himself by mildly declaring that he considered the motion "of most dangerous tendency" but he did not dare to divide on it.

The Speaker put the motion; there was a roar of approval, many of those who had just voted for the Union joining in the cry. A feeble "No" from Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Toler (afterwards Lord Norbury) seemed to accentuate the enthusiasm of the assent.

The motion was carried, the members rose to withdraw, when the Speaker, Mr. Foster, himself a strong opponent of the Union, anxious, no doubt, to give the fullest emphasis to this declaration, in an evil moment requested Mr. Ponsonby to write out the precise terms of his motion.

The Government benches maintained a dismal silence; Mr. Toler alone, we are told, displayed

that playfulness which never forsook him even in later life when, as Lord Norbury, he sentenced a man to death.

Mr. Ponsonby, we read, as he handed his motion to the Speaker " looked around him with the honest confidence of a man who has performed his duty and saved his country." The silence of death prevailed in the galleries, the excitement was too intense for words.

The Speaker repeated the question. The " ayes " burst forth again into a loud peal, the " noes " were inaudible. On the question being put a second time (as was usual) a still louder and reiterated cry of " Aye ! Aye ! " resounded from every quarter ; only the same two negatives were feebly heard from the ministerial side.

Government had given up the contest, and the independence of Ireland was on the very verge of permanent security when, to the surprise and dismay of the triumphant Opposition, Mr. William Charles Fortescue, the undistinguished member for Louth County, requested to be heard before the final decision was announced. He was one of those precise, self-sufficient fools who are found in every assembly, and who love the sound of their own voices. He said that he was averse to the measure of a legislative Union and had given his decided vote against it, but he did not wish to bind himself for ever ; he did not approve of any determination which for ever closed doors against any possibility of future discussion.

The Opposition was paralysed, the Government

was roused to rejoicing. A single sentence plausibly conceived and uttered by an unreflecting respectable fool decided the fate of the Irish nation. It offered a pretext for timidity, a precedent for caution, and a subterfuge for wavering venality. Mr. French, of Roscommon, a dull country gentleman, Lord Cole, a young nobleman of honest, inconsiderate mind, both of whom had on the last division voted sincerely against the minister, lightly declared themselves of Mr. Fortescue's opinion. Mr. John Claudius Beresford, who had only been restrained from supporting the Union by the fact that he was representative of the metropolis, eager to curry favour with Lord Clare, avowed himself of the same determination.

It is no exaggeration to say that by this trivial incident the fate of Ireland was decided. If the egregious Mr. Fortescue had held his tongue for one moment longer Ponsonby's motion would have been carried by acclamation and the project of the Union could never be revived. As it was the spirits of the defeated Unionists revived, the triumphant Opposition were dismayed. Ponsonby had no option but to withdraw his motion. For the Opposition it was retreat after victory, for the Government a triumph after a defeat—a triumph which stimulated them to proceed with their project.

The people, however, for the moment realised only the immediate victory and frantically cheered each conspicuous member of the Opposition as he emerged from the House. The horses were taken

from the carriage of Mr. Speaker and he was drawn in triumph through the streets. A suggestion that Lord Clare should be harnessed, Roman fashion, to his chariot wheel was taken up with enthusiasm and for this end his lordship was chased by the cheering crowd till he found refuge in a receding doorway in Clarendon Street and turned, pistol in hand, on his pursuers, who laughed and left him. Their rejoicing took the form of wholly good-natured horse-play in which no one was injured.

When a certain Mr. Martin turned on a vast crowd with a toy pistol in his hand and swore he "would shoot every mother's son of them as dead as paving-stones," the combined pluck and absurdity of the proceeding so tickled the crowd that they laughed uproariously and cheered him to the echo.

The Unionists, however, did not take their defeat so good-humouredly as the people took their victory. The servants of Lord Clare, as Lecky tells us, fired upon the people and his lordship expressed a kindly hope that some of them were wounded.

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CHAPTER XXIII

A CARNIVAL OF CORRUPTION

The methods of the Government—Military intimidation—The people shot in the streets—Artillery to blow up a meeting—Wholesale corruption—Three millions for bribes—A million and a quarter for boroughs—Some striking examples—The temptation of Bushe and Edgeworth—Protest of the people—Inducements to the Catholics—Dan O'Connell's maiden speech—Preferred the Penal Laws to the Union.

ENCOURAGED, however, by the forced withdrawal of Ponsonby's motion, Castlereagh, Clare, and Cooke set themselves with renewed activity to intimidate and corrupt the Parliament into accepting the Union, and even the Lord-Lieutenant, Cornwallis, did not disdain to participate in this ignoble campaign. He made a tour of the country, afterwards scornfully described by Plunket, in which he strove to beat up recruits from the lowest ranks of the people. Paupers and felons were canvassed for signatures in favour of the Union, while gross intimidation was freely practised to prevent petitions in its favour.

Lord Clare, irritated at the outspoken opposition of Dublin, had the Privy Council called together and urged the necessity of making a

salutary example. Accordingly at about nine at night a party of the military, stationed at the old Custom House near Essex Bridge, silently sallied out with trailed arms, without any civil magistrate and only a sergeant to command them. When they arrived at Capel Street they found the people vehemently cheering their friends and with equal vehemence booing their enemies. But there was no tumult. No magistrate appeared, no Riot Act read, and nothing done in any way to warrant the interference of the military.

The soldiers, however, instantly took up position across the street and, without being in any way attacked, fired a volley of ball into the crowd. A number were killed, a still larger number were wounded. One man fell, shot stone dead, at the feet of Mr. P. Hamilton, the King's Proctor in Admiralty, who was out to look at the illuminations. For this military outrage no one was punished, no one was so much as reprimanded.

One other illustration of the spirit that prevailed may suffice. Sir Lawrence Parsons called attention in Parliament to the conduct of Mr. D. Danby, High Sheriff for King's County, and Major Rogers, an officer in command of British artillery, who had sought to intimidate a great meeting of freeholders from the assertion of their constitutional right. It was proved on the evidence of Mr. Bernard, J.P., that a great meeting of the freeholders and magistrates of the county met in the Court House to protest against the Union. The resolution against it was unanimously adopted and

the members of the meeting proceeded to sign a petition.

Mr. Bernard left after having signed his name and "met Major Rogers advancing with a company of Scotch Fusiliers and four pieces of artillery with matches ready, (whether lighted or not he could not say,) upon the Court House. He told Mr. Bernard he was only waiting for the Sheriff's orders to blow down the house to its foundations. Mr. Bernard said: 'Good God, what is all this for?' Rogers replied: 'This is what you must expect when things do not go square.'"

It appeared that it was only a miscarriage of the post that prevented a catastrophe. Major Rogers at the Bar of the House admitted the truth of Bernard's evidence. But the Government carried a motion that there was no interference with the right of petition and shortly afterwards the major was "gratified" with a lucrative position.

But it was not on intimidation but on corruption that the main reliance of the Unionists were set. The Place Act, which was devised to purify Parliament, was used as an engine of pollution. It was provided by the Place Act that a member on accepting an appointment *ipso facto* resigned his membership. Those whom conscience or shame forbade actually to support the Union accepted the nominal post of Excheatorship of Munster to make room for a substitute with a thicker skin or a more elastic conscience. The members that went out and the members that came in were both paid. On the other hand, the Excheatorship of Munster

was refused to members of the Opposition who were unable to attend and whose successors could not be relied on.

Some singular cases of individual barter and sale are recorded. Mr. Handcock, member for Athlone, was a conspicuous and vehement opponent of the Union. He devised toasts and composed ballads against it and drank and sung himself into a condition of patriotic fervour that marked him out for the Castle triumvirate as a valuable convert.

He knew his own value, however, and stood out for the last penny of his price. It was not until a coronet had been added to the bribe that he found salvation. The next year found Mr. Handcock drinking toasts and writing ballads and voting in favour of the Union, and the year after he was ennobled under the title of Lord Castlemain.

Lord Belvedere, before the terms of his purchase were arranged, was an ardent opponent of the Union. There is preserved in the handwriting of the noble earl the following resolutions prepared by him for signature by the freeholders of the County West Meath.

"Resolved: That the free and independent legislature of Ireland having been unequivocally established, every measure that tends to encroach on it calls for implicit disapprobation."

"The depending project of a Union with Great Britain has the appearance of being merely a transfer of Parliament, is in fact a complete extinction of it; that it is the duty of Irishmen of every description to come forward and by all constitu-

tional means to resist the scheme so subversive of the real interest, prosperity, and dignity of their country."

"That we entertain too high an opinion of our representatives to suppose them capable of voting away the rights of the people had a power of such a nature been ever invested in them."

Two barristers, Mr. Knott and Mr. Crowe, had been returned by his lordship for the pocket borough of Philipstown, and they enthusiastically shared the patriotic convictions of their noble patron. In the session of 1799 they violently opposed the Union. Mr. Knott said: "I am satisfied that in point of commerce England has nothing to give to this country, but were it otherwise I would not condescend to argue the subject, for I would not surrender the liberties of my country for the riches of the universe! I cannot express the horror I feel at a proposition so degrading; it is insulting to entertain it even for a moment! What! shall we deliberate whether this kingdom shall cease to exist? Whether this land shall be struck from the scale of nations? Whether its very name be erased from the map of the world for ever? Shall it, I say, be a question whether we surrender to another separate country and to a separate legislature the lives, liberties, and properties of five millions of people who delegated us to defend but not destroy the constitution? It is a monstrous proposition and should be considered merely to mingle our disgust and execration

with those of the people and then dash it from us never to be resumed!"

Mr. Crowe held similar language. The earl got £15,000 for his borough and a handsome personal douceur, Messrs. Knott and Crowe were also "gratified," and voted in 1800 for the measure they denounced in 1799.

It is not possible to form any accurate estimation of the vast system of corruption. Most of the details were judiciously destroyed. But sufficient of the records escaped and were made public to awaken the wonder of posterity.

Gilbert writes: "The amount expended by the Government to procure a majority has been stated at £3,000,000, exclusive of twenty-nine new creations and twenty promotions in the Irish peerage, together with English peerages conferred on six noblemen 'on account of Irish services' at this juncture.

"In addition to the foregoing the sum of £1,260,000 was paid under the Bill authorising compensation for disfranchised boroughs, the total number of which was eighty-four. Fifteen thousand pounds, the sum allotted for each borough, was apportioned among the various patrons according to their individual interests. The largest sums paid for boroughs were £52,000 to Lord Downshire, who had seven seats, £45,000 to Lord Ely for six seats. The other proprietors owning more than two seats were the Duke of Devonshire, Lords Granard, Shannon, Belmore, Clifden, Abercorn, Mr. Tighe, and Mr. Bruen, each of whom had four seats.

"'This does not,' it has been observed, 'give a complete idea of the parliamentary weight of the great borough proprietors. Besides the seats for which they received compensation, many of them had influence in places which were still to return one member to the Imperial Parliament. Thus Lord Ely had one seat in Wexford, Lord Shannon at Youghal, the Duke of Devonshire one at Bandon and one at Dungarvan, and Lord Abercorn one, if not both, at Dungannon. Many of the counties were almost entirely in the hands of certain great families whose nominations were scarcely ever disputed. A few boroughs nominally open were practically close, and some three or four families had, by intermarriages, acquired a power which rendered them most formidable to any Government. The Ponsonbys, for example, exercised influence direct or indirect over twenty-two seats, Lord Downshire and the Beresfords respectively over nearly as many. Nor was this all; the great borough mongers constantly bought from other persons seats for which they returned their own adherents. Lord Logueville claimed Cork and Mallow and six other seats as his own. Lords Shannon and Ely were in a similar position.'" For all these payment was made by the Government in cash or kind.

The following is a short extract from a Government account for goods sold and delivered in the political market:—

Lord Shannon received for his patronage in the Commons				£45,000
The Marquis of Ely	„	„	„	45,000
Lord Clanmorris (besides a peerage)	„	„		25,000
Lord Belvidere (besides his douceur)	„	„		15,000
Sir Hercules Langushe	„	„	„	15,000

In spite of corruption and intimidation, however, the spirit of the nation remained determinedly opposed to the Union. "Twenty-seven counties petitioned against it. The petition of Co. Down was signed by upwards of seventeen thousand respectable, independent men, and all the others in similar proportion. Dublin petitioned under the great seal of the city, and each of the corporations in it followed the example. Drogheda petitioned against the Union and almost every town in the kingdom in like manner signified its disapprobation. Those in favour of the measure, possessing great influence in the country, obtained some counter petitions, but only a few signatures could be raked in and those with the greatest difficulty. The petition from the Co. Down against the Union was signed by seventeen thousand, the counter petition was signed only by four hundred and fifteen. Seven hundred and seven thousand persons signed petitions against the measure; the total number of petitioners who declared themselves in favour of it did not exceed three thousand, and of these several only prayed that it might be discussed."

"In fact," observed Mr. Grey in the English Parliament, "the nation is nearly unanimous, and this great majority is composed not of fanatics, bigots or Jacobins, but of the most respectable of every class of the community."

"A loud and universal outcry," said Peter Burrowes, "issues from every quarter of Ireland against this detestable measure. The city of

Dublin, the University, the counties—the property, the populacy, and the talents of the nation—all ranks and all religions unite in one grand confederacy against it. The public sentiment can be no longer falsified; it forces itself on the senses of every man who can see or hear. No man can stir out of the pale of the Castle, no man can travel through any quarter of Ireland without reading it in the anxious conflict of passions and feelings depicted in every countenance he meets. These are solemn moral manifestations of the active sentiment of a nation; these are awful warnings which the benignity of Providence interposes between the rash projects of ministers and irretrievable mischief. May God avert the storm and save the nation!"

For every man whom the Government could hope to influence an extravagant bid was made. Bushe gives an account of the tremendous temptations to which he, a poor man, was subjected. A very interesting exposure of the methods of the Government is afforded by Mr. Richard Lovel Edgeworth—father of the famous Maria Edgeworth—who sat as member for the borough of St. John's town.

Writing on March 31, 1800, to Dr. Darwin, he observed: "It is intended to force this measure down the throats of the Irish, though five-sixths of the nation are against it. The Minister avows that seventy-two boroughs are to be compensated, *i.e.*, bought by the people of Ireland, with one million and a half of their own money, and he

makes this legal by a small majority made up chiefly of the very borough members. When thirty-eight county members out of sixty-four are against the measure and twenty-eight counties out of the thirty-two have petitioned against it, this is such abominable corruption that it makes our parliamentary sanction worse than ridiculous.

"I have a charming opportunity," adds Edgeworth, "of advancing myself and my family, but I did not think it wise to quarrel with myself and lose my own good opinion at my time of life. What *did* lie in my way for my vote I will not say, but I stated in my place in the House that I had been offered three thousand guineas for my seat during the few remaining weeks of the session."

The central lodge of the Orange Society advised neutrality, but in defiance of that advice there were, Lecky tells us, innumerable Orange petitions against the Union and no single one in its favour. It is not pleasant to record that the Catholic Episcopacy in many dioceses lent their support to the Government and of course influenced their flocks in the same direction. It is only fair to add that the greatest inducements were offered to secure Catholic support. The bishops and priests were to be salaried by the Government, and complete Catholic Emancipation was to be granted at once by the United Imperial Parliament.

It is said that both Lord Cornwallis and Pitt were in favour of Catholic Emancipation as part of the Union, and that Pitt was over-persuaded

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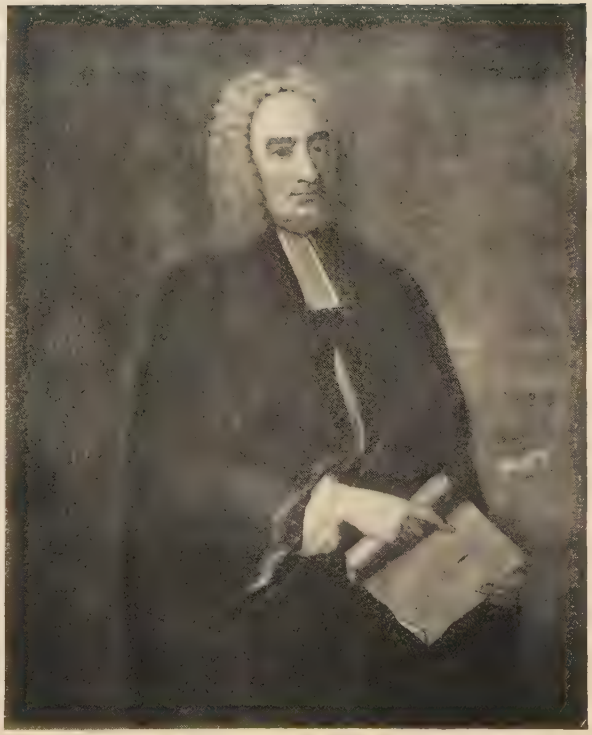

[*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

DEAN SWIFT.

From a portrait in possession of Mr. J. G. Swift MacNeill, K.C., M.P.

Bernard Mulrenin, R.H.A.] [*Photo Emery Walker.*

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

From a miniature in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

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by the arguments of Lord Clare, who crossed to London for that purpose.

That Lord Clare was bitterly opposed to Catholic Emancipation is certain, but it may be doubted if it was ever seriously contemplated by Pitt. As Lecky points out, he knew, though he concealed that knowledge from the Catholic leaders, lay and cleric, that he had to reckon with the unrelenting opposition of the King, who had over and over again declared that he would regard it as a breach of his Coronation oath to assent to the measure. While the Union was in treaty George III. wrote to his great minister that " Lord Cornwallis must clearly understand that no indulgence can be granted to Catholics further than has been—I am afraid inadvisedly—done in former sessions."

It is certain that the royal determination was sedulously concealed from the Catholics, and they were buoyed up with false hopes of immediate Emancipation as the price of their support.

With the Catholics of Dublin, however, these fraudulent inducements were wholly ineffective.

A meeting of the Dublin Catholics was called at the Royal Exchange to protest against the Union. As usual Lord Clare's first suggestion was to prevent or disperse the meeting by military force, but he was overruled by his colleagues, and the meeting was duly held with Mr. Ambrose Moore in the chair. The chief speech at the meeting was made by Daniel O'Connell, then a rising young barrister.

Nearly half a century later O'Connell, then un-

questioned leader of the Irish people, at a Repeal Meeting in the Dublin Corporation, alluded to his speech on that occasion. "It was my maiden speech," he said, "and was accurately reported because I reported it myself." He also gave a very graphic description of the circumstances under which the meeting was held.

"We had hardly taken our places in the crowded hall when we heard the steady tramp of the military advancing, and Major Sirr entered the hall at the head of a company of soldiers, which he drew up on either side of the building and requested the chairman to submit to him the resolutions about to be proposed, when he graciously permitted the meeting to proceed."

Young O'Connell, at least, was not intimidated by this display of armed force. His speech showed no trace of fear. "It is daringly and insolently asserted," he said, "that the Catholics of Ireland were the friends of the measure of the Union, that they were silent allies to that conspiracy formed against the name, the interests, and the liberties of Ireland. They were compelled to meet to repudiate that calumny. Sir," he continued, "it is my sentiment, and I am satisfied it is the sentiment not only of every gentleman who now hears me but of the Catholic people of Ireland, that if our opposition to this injurious, insulting, and hateful measure of the Union were to draw down upon us a revival of the penal laws we would boldly meet a proscription and oppression which would be the testimonies of our virtue and sooner throw

ourselves once more on the mercy of our Protestant brethren than give our consent to the political murder of our country. I do know that—though exclusive advantages may be ambiguously held forth to the Irish Catholic to seduce him from the sacred duty he owes his country—I know that the Catholics of Ireland still remember that they have a country and that they will never accept any advantage as a sect that would debase and destroy them as a people."

CHAPTER XXIV

ATTACK AND DEFENCE

The Union in the Irish House of Lords—In the British House of Commons—The Castle campaign—Castlereagh's Duelling Club—Battle is joined—Bushe on the blessings of a native Parliament—Plunket's indictment of the Government.

By the overwhelming influence of Lord Clare, who delivered a four-hour speech in its favour, a Unionist resolution was accepted by the House of Lords.

In the English House of Commons a series of resolutions to ground a Bill were carried after three weeks' debate, despite the eloquent protest of Sheridan. Fox also was opposed to it, but having seceded from Parliament, a fashion too prevalent in those days, he took no active share in the opposition.

The reception of the project in England was very different to the reception afforded to the Irish Declaration of Independence. There was no hesitation nor reluctance now, no desire to evade or reject it. Lecky records that the minority against any resolution of the Union series in the British House of Commons never exceeded twenty-four and was generally as low as fifteen.

The Irish Government made ready in the beginning of the year 1800 to renew the conflict in the Irish House of Commons. One final precaution taken by Lord Castlereagh is so singular as to demand attention.

The part that duelling played in Irish life has been already described; Lord Castlereagh decided that the Unionists must take full advantage of this form of political warfare. A detailed account of the forming of the Parliamentary Duelling Club is to be found in Barrington's "Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation."

Lord Castlereagh invited to dinner at his house in Merrion Square about twenty of his most staunch supporters, consisting of "tried men" of fighting families who might feel an individual pride in resenting every personality of the Opposition and identifying their own honour with the cause of the Government. "This dinner was sumptuous; the champagne and madeira had their due effect; no man could, when he chose, be more condescending than the noble host. After due preparation the point was skilfully introduced by Sir John Blaquiere (afterwards created Lord De Blaquiere), an able, polished, and convivial diplomatist, of all men best calculated to promote a gentlemanly, convivial, fighting conspiracy."

"He stated that he understood the Opposition were disposed to personal unkindness, or even incivilities, towards his Majesty's best friends, the Unionists of Ireland. He was determined that no man should advance upon him by degrading the

party he had adopted and the measures he was pledged to support.

"The company hilariously approved. Lord Castlereagh alone affected hesitation, lest the idea should appear to have originated with him. But he encouraged even when he seemed to disprove, and when he found the company wound up to the proper pitch he calmly observed that some mode should, at all events, be taken to secure the constant presence of a sufficient number of Government friends during the discussion, as subjects of importance were often totally lost for want of due attendance. Thereupon one of his satellites, by previous arrangement, humorously proposed to have a dinner provided for twenty or thirty each day in one of the committee chambers, where they could always be at hand to make up a house or for any unexpected emergency that should call for their services. Mr. Cooke hinted at the splendid rewards that would follow such services, and, as the claret circulated freely, every man was elated at the prospect of a handsome bribe or high promotion."

The scheme was unanimously adopted. Sir John Blaquiere pleasantly observed that, at all events, they would be sure of a good "cook" at their dinners. So what was in effect a duelling club was established, the company pledging themselves for fee and reward to eat, drink, speak, and fight in support of Lord Castlereagh and the Union.

The Unionist leaders were not, however, quite prepared to give battle to the enemy when Parlia-

ment reassembled. They were waiting for reinforcements. A large number of recruits had taken the shilling but had not yet joined the army. A number of seats vacated under the Places Act still remained to be filled by the purchased supporters of the Government. Accordingly, in the speech from the throne there was not the faintest hint of the measure on which all men's minds were concentrated and which Lord Cornwallis had pledged himself to bring forward at the first opportunity.

The Opposition, however, resolved to force the fighting, and in pursuance of this forward policy Ponsonby moved an amendment pledging the House to maintain a resident and independent Parliament, and on this issue the battle was joined.

This amendment was supported by James Fitzgerald, Parnell, Bushe, Hardy, A. Moore, Barrington, and Egan. They reminded the House that in the settlement of 1782, when more than eighty thousand Volunteers were in arms and when England's sun seemed to have set, Ireland had no hint of separation: that through an Independent Parliament the country had obtained the Octennial Bill, the Mutiny Bill, the repeal of Poynings' Law, the independence of the judges, the restoration of the appellant jurisdiction, a free trade and a free constitution: and they charged the Government with resorting to infamous artifices in procuring forged signatures to petitions and in packing the Parliament with their dependants to enable them to carry the measure while the people were under

martial law, the Habeas Corpus Act suspended, and the country covered with an army greater than ever known before. They further insisted on the incompetency of the legislature to abolish itself.

"I," said Bushe, "strip this formidable measure of all its pretences and its aggravations; I look at it nakedly and abstractedly, and I see nothing in it but one question: Will you give up your country? For centuries has the British nation and Parliament kept you down, shackled your commerce, paralysed your exertions, despised your character, and ridiculed your pretensions to any privileges commercial or constitutional. She never conceded a point to you which she could avoid or granted a favour which was not reluctantly distilled. All have been wrung from her like drops of her heart's blood, and you are not in possession of a single blessing, except those which you derive from God, that has not been either purchased or extorted by virtue of your own Parliament from the illiberality of England.

"Is our House of Commons nothing but an engine for raising money out of the pocket of the subject and throwing it into the coffers of the Crown? Take up any volume of your statutes upon that table; you will find the municipal Acts of Parliament in the proportion of more than forty to one to the Imperial. What has within the memory of many men alive changed the face of your land? What has covered a country of pasture with tillage? What has intersected an impassable country with roads? What has nearly connected

by inland navigation the eastern channel with the western ocean? A resident Parliament.

"This is not theory—look at your statutes and your journals and there is not one of those improvements which you cannot trace to some document of your own public spirit, now upon that table, and to no other course or cause under heaven. Can this be supplied in Westminster? Could a committee of this House make a road in Yorkshire? No," concluded Bushe, "nothing can supply the want of a resident Parliament, watching over national improvement, encouraging manufacture, commerce, science, education, and agriculture; applying instant remedy to constant mischief, mixing with the constituent body, catching the sentiment of the public mind, reflecting public opinion, acting upon its impulse and regulating its excess."

Again Plunket delivered a speech of irresistible force and impassioned eloquence; again he boldly taunted the ministers with corruption, twitted Lord Castlereagh with not seeking refuge from public execration in a private position when his odious attack on the liberty of the country was defeated by an unpurchased House of Commons.

"How," he asked, "has the measure of the Union been introduced into this House? Have the inducements of office been held out to any members of the Opposition? Have the old and faithful servants of the Crown been dismissed and their places pointed to in order to tempt the integrity of political virtue? Have bribery and corruption been

resorted to for the purpose of making that majority which the unbiased play of honest principle would never make. Sir, let the minister answer, for he is one of those who can best tell. But this much, sir, I will say, that nor place, nor power, nor bribery, nor corruption influenced any man who voted against the minister's measure, but in the strength of honest principle it was rejected."

He protested against the "barter of liberty, even supposing your advantages are real as they are visionary. The nation which enters into such a traffic is besotted. Freedom is the parent of wealth, and it is an act of parricide to sacrifice the constitution which generates and nourishes your commerce for the supposed improvement of that commerce. This is, indeed, in all circumstances, the most extravagant demand ever made by one nation on another. Ireland, a happy little island with a population of between four and five millions of people, hardy, gallant, and enthusiastic, possessed of all the means of civilisation, agriculture, and commerce, well pursued and understood, laws well arranged and administered, a constitution freely recognised and established, her revenue, her trade, her manufacture thriving beyond the hope or example of any other country of her extent within the last few years, advancing with a rapidity, astonishing even to herself, not complaining of deficiency, but enjoying and acknowledging her prosperity, is called upon to surrender it all."

In the following passage he seems to anticipate the Unionist agitation of nearly a hundred years

later for the reduction of the Irish representation expressly provided for in the Act of Union.

"England was guilty of breach of faith in attempting to destroy the settlement which she declared to be final in 1782. If English members wish to extinguish your hundred representatives and make you a province in form as well as in substance, may they not say: 'We told you in 1800 you had no constitution. Your pretended compact you then surrendered. We admitted you to our Parliament by courtesy and for a time, and we now, at our pleasure, dismiss you from it?'"

In words of the bitterest scorn he described the mission on which the Viceroy had engaged to manufacture support for the Union in the country.

"It is painful," he said, "to dwell on that disgraceful expedition. "No place too obscure to be visited, no rank too low to be counted, no threat too vile to be employed, public addresses sought from petty villages, and private signatures smuggled from populous counties. How procured? By the influence of absentee landlords, not over the affections but over the terrors of their tenantry. After employing revenue officers to threaten the publican that he should be marked as a victim and the agent to terrify the shivering tenant with the prospect of his bog turf being withheld if he did not sign your addresses, after employing your military commanders, the uncontrolled arbiters of life and death, to hound the rabble against the constituted authorities, after squeezing the lowest dregs of a population of nearly five millions, you

obtained about five thousand signatories, three-fourths of whom affixed their names in surprise, terror, or total ignorance of the subject."

In conclusion Plunket referred again to the open corruption of the Government: "I state here as a fact that you cannot dare to deny that £15,000 is the sum to be given to certain individuals as the price of their surrendering. What! their property? No, but the representative rights of the people in Ireland; and you will then proceed in this or in the Imperial Parliament to lay taxes on the wretched natives of this land to pay the purchase money of their own slavery."

Plunket's speech created a tremendous sensation, but already a greater than Plunket was at hand.

CHAPTER XXV

THE COMING OF GRATTAN

Grattan in retirement—The Government plot—Grattan narrowly escapes impeachment—Trinity College insults his portrait—Rumour of his return—An heroic wife prevails—The Government procrastinates—Writ at midnight—His appearance in the House—A wonderful demonstration—His speech a miracle—Corruption triumphs over eloquence.

GRATTAN, from the date of his contemptuous retirement in 1797 from the corrupt and incompetent Irish Parliament, took no part in public affairs. He had not, however, escaped the insidious attentions of the Government, which, from the first, recognised in him the most formidable obstacle to the Union, and paid him the compliment of believing his corruption was impossible. They accordingly took a shorter and a sharper method. It was resolved to impeach him for high treason, and one of the hired swearers, of whom a large gang were in the regular employment of the Castle, was ready with his evidence to implicate him in the rebellion of '98. Fortunately the dates went wrong. Grattan was in Maidstone to give evidence on behalf of Arthur O'Connor at the very time that the zealous informer swore to acts of

treason committed in Ireland. The fact probably saved his life. The case broke down and the prosecution was abandoned. But Grattan was dismissed from the Privy Council and his portrait in Trinity College was first turned with its face to the wall and subsequently removed to the kitchen.

But now a rumour had gone abroad, heard with dismay by the Unionists and with mingled incredulity and delight by their opponents, that Grattan was about to return. It was known that his friends had entreated him to save the Parliament he had created; but, enfeebled by long illness and bitter disappointment, broken down in health and hope, he for a long time resisted their entreaties. His wife, however, ultimately prevailed where friends had failed.

"I urged him," said Mrs. Grattan, "most earnestly to take the seat that was offered him. It was his plain duty," I said, "to return to Parliament. The people had generously repaid his services in 1782 for standing by them in time of need, and he was bound in honour to spend his money and his time and, if need be, shed his blood in their defence."

Mr. Henry Tighe, having arranged that Grattan should be returned for the borough of Wicklow, he was brought from Tinnehinch to Baggot Street, Dublin, to remain undisturbed till Parliament assembled.

Lord Castlereagh and Lord Clare, fearing the effect of his eloquence, kept back the writ to the

HENRIETTA GRATTAN.

Portrait in the National Gallery of Ireland.

To face p. 244.

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last moment, hoping he would be late for the debate. But a friendly sheriff held the election on the night the writ was returned and a sufficient number of voters were got together to return Grattan before midnight. Tighe induced the officer to sign the return and at once set off on horseback to Dublin.

"He arrived," writes Mrs. Grattan, "at about five in the morning, when we heard a loud knocking at the door. Mr. Grattan, who was very ill in bed, was awakened by the sound. 'Oh, here they come,' he exclaimed; 'why will they not let me die in peace?'

"The question of the Union had become a nightmare to him; he could not bear to hear or speak on it with any degree of patience; any allusion to the subject almost drove him frantic."

"I told him," continues Mrs. Grattan, "that he must get up immediately and go down to the House; so we got him out of bed and dressed him and I had to help him downstairs. Then he went into the parlour and loaded his pistols and I saw him put them in his pocket, for he apprehended that he might be attacked by the Union party and assassinated. We wrapped a blanket round him and put him into a sedan-chair, and when he left the door I stood there, uncertain whether I should ever see him again.

"Afterwards Mr. McCan came to me and said I need not be alarmed as Mr. Grattan's friends had determined to come forward in case he was attacked and, if necessary, take his place in the

event of any personal quarrel. When I had heard that I thanked him for his kindness, but told him that my husband could not die better than in defence of his country."

The debate in the House of Commons had lasted through the entire night. John Egan commenced to speak in opposition to the Union between seven and eight in the morning, when all at once the sound of the cheers of the vast crowd that waited all night in College Green, forcing a way through wall and door, was felt like the low muttering of thunder in the legislative chamber.

Ponsonby and Moore left the House and almost immediately returned leading the feeble and emaciated form of Grattan, who could not move without support. Egan, who was speaking at the moment, broke off in the middle of a sentence. A silence more impressive than cheers fell upon the assembly as the strange procession moved slowly from the door towards the Speaker's chair. At that sad spectacle, those tell who saw, men and women on the floor and in the galleries were moved to tears.

Always pale, Grattan was ghastly now; always thin, he was haggard as a spectre. The same old Volunteer uniform which he had worn on that glorious day when he saluted a liberated Ireland with the words "*Esto perpetua!*" now hung loose on his emaciated frame. All his life seemed concentrated in the blaze of those dark eyes that spoke of unquenchable fervour and inconquerable will. The founder of the independent Parliament was

come, as all believed, to spend his last breath in its defence.

Even Castlereagh was stirred at the sight from his customary callousness. Pale as a ghost, he rose and stood with the whole body of Unionists while the procession went slowly by.

When at last Grattan dropped exhausted into the seat he had left vacant too long a reverential murmur spread through the House which gradually deepened into a frenzy of applause. Then silence fell once more. Mr. Egan did not resume his interrupted speech, no other speaker rose—the House was waiting for the greatest of its tribunes.

Instinctively Grattan attempted to rise and from very weakness fell back into his seat. In a voice that was scarcely audible he begged leave to speak from where he sat. The leave was accorded with acclamation. But for a moment his friends thought he had taxed his strength too far, that speech was impossible. He looked, we are told, like a corpse new risen from the dead.

Then he spoke, a miracle of mind and will over the frailties of the body ; a wonderful speech, full of solid reasoning and scornful invective and those flashes of inspired eloquence that had so often entranced that great assembly.

No description nor extract can do justice to that speech, so perfect as a whole. In a voice that grew in volume as he spoke he denied the right of Parliament to sell the people to slavery, he ridiculed the promises of Castlereagh of the manifold advantages Ireland would derive from the Union.

" Imagination," he said, " is the region in which the minister delights to disport; when he is to take away your Parliament, when he is to take away your final judicature, when he is to take away your money, when he is to increase your taxes, when he is to get an Irish tribute—there he is a plain, matter-of-fact man; but when he is to pay you for all this, then he is poetic and prophetic, no longer a financier but an inspired accountant.

" I do not approve of all the Parliaments that have sat in Ireland—I left the former Parliament because I condemned its proceedings—but I argue not like the minister from the misconduct of one Parliament against the being of Parliament itself. I value that parliamentary constitution by the average of its benefits, and I affirm that the blessings procured by the Irish Parliament in the last twenty years are greater than all the blessings afforded by the British Parliament to Ireland for the last century, greater even than the mischiefs inflicted on Ireland by the British Parliaments, greater than all the blessings procured by those Parliaments for their own country within that period. Within that time the Parliament of England lost an Empire and the Parliament of Ireland recovered a constitution."

He foretold the attitude of the Imperial Parliament towards Ireland :—

" Well, this assembly, this Imperial Parliament, what are its elements? Irish absentees who have forsaken their country and a British Parliament that took away the constitution. Does Mr. Pitt say that

such a Parliament will have no prejudices against Ireland? Let him look at his speeches—a capital understanding, a comprehensive knowledge, a transcendent eloquence ; hear him with all these powers speak on the subject of Ireland, whether it be the conduct of her administration, the character of her people, her commerce or her covenants or her constitution, and he betrays an ignorance that would dishonour an idiot.

" Does he wish for further instances? Let him look to the speeches of his agents in Ireland, speeches made and published for the palate and the prejudices of the English Court ; what description of men have they not traduced, what patriotic achievements have they not deprecated, what honest character have they not belied? Does he look for further instances? Let him turn to his catalogue. What notorious apostate has he not honoured? What impudent defamer of the rights and character has he not advanced?

" On the other hand, what man that made a stand for her liberties has he not dismissed? Mr. Fitzgerald and Sir John Parnell, who had supported his Government, long refused to abandon their country and their honour and were immediately told that they were no longer fit for the services of the Government. Mr. Foster, who had supported his administration, long held up his shield for that Parliament for which he is the natural advocate, and was immediately honoured by the enmity of the Court and a personal attack on his character and consistency.

"The league of separation was effectively demolished. Ireland considers the British Empire as a great western barrier against invasion from other countries; invasion on what? Invasion on her liberties, on her rights and privileges; invasion of self-legislation, the parent and protectress of them all. She heard the ocean protesting against separation but she hears the sea likewise protesting against Union; she follows, therefore, her physical destination and obeys the dispensation of Providence when she protests like the sea against the two situations, both equally unnatural—separation and union."

After two hours of eloquent speech Grattan concluded with unabated vigour:—

"The thing the minister proposes to put is a thing that cannot be sold—Liberty! For it he has nothing to give. Everything of value which you possess you obtained under a free constitution. Part with it and you must be not only a slave but an idiot. His propositions not only go to your dishonour, but they are built on nothing else. He tells you—it is his main argument—that you are unfit to exercise a free constitution, and he affects to prove it by an experiment. Your exports since your emancipation and under that parliamentary constitution, and in a great measure by that parliamentary constitution, have nearly doubled; commercially it has worked well. Your concord with England since the Emancipation, as far as it relates to Parliament on the subject of war, has not only improved but has been productive; imperially, therefore, it has worked well.

" What then does the minister, in fact, object to? That you have supported him, that you have concurred in his system, therefore he proposes to the people to abolish the Parliament and to continue the minister. He does more: he proposes to you to substitute the British Parliament in your place; to destroy the body that restored your liberties and restore that body which destroyed them. Against such a proposition, were I expiring on the floor I should utter my last breath and record my dying testimony."

Dead silence fell again when he had closed, and one can well believe that there were many troubled consciences in that great corrupt assembly, many who felt the pangs of wounded honour. " But the jingling of the guinea heals the wounds that honour feels." The price had been paid and the goods must be delivered. Grattan's eloquence availed nothing against the more substantial arguments of Castlereagh. Though the Government could not yet muster its full forces it won by a majority of one hundred and thirty-eight to ninety-six. A day of shame for Ireland!

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CHAPTER XXVI

UNIONIST VICTORY

Castlereagh and Grattan—A contemptible expedient—Corry's insulting attack—Grattan's scorching reply—A facilitated duel—Corry wounded—Reconciliation at his bedside—Corry to his brother: "Mr. Grattan will shoot you whenever you deserve it"—Increased majority of Government—The beginning of the end.

AGAIN battle was joined in the House of Commons on February 5th, when Castlereagh unfolded the plan of the Union, and Grattan demolished it in detail in a speech of such closely reasoned argument that even the Unionists were manifestly dismayed.

Coolly calculating the chances, Lord Castlereagh arranged for a personal attack on Grattan, whose physical weakness, hardly less than his high character, should have protected him from insult. The instrument selected was Mr. Isaac Corry, who had been promoted to the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer when Sir John Parnell was dismissed for his opposition to the Union. Corry had been in former days a parasite of Grattan's, and had even written in his praise a fulsome poem, no single line of which is worth recalling. But he

must work for his wages, and the higher the wages the dirtier the work. Now at his master's orders he delivered a rancorous personal abuse of Grattan which few men on either side of the House could have brought themselves to utter. He denounced him as " a mendicant patriot " and " unimpeached traitor."

Never did offence meet prompter punishment. Grattan's reply was scorching in its vehemence and scorn ; it branded his wretched victim's reputation for all time.

" On any other occasion," he said, " I should think myself justifiable in treating with silent contempt anything which might fall from that honourable member ; but there are times when the insignificance of the accuser is lost in the magnitude of the accusation. I know the difficulty the honourable gentleman laboured under when he attacked me, conscious that on a comparative view of our characters, public and private, there is nothing he would say which would injure me. The public would not believe the charge, I despise the falsehood.

" The right honourable gentleman has called me an unimpeached traitor. Why, I ask, not ' traitor ' unqualified by any epithet? I will tell him—it is because he dare not. It was the act of a coward who raises his arm to strike but has not the courage to give the blow. I will not call him villain, because it would be unparliamentary and he is a Privy Councillor. I will not call him fool, because he happens to be Chancellor of the Exchequer ; but

I say he is one who has abused the privilege of Parliament and freedom of debate to uttering language which if spoken out of the House I would answer only with a blow. I care not how high his situation, how low his character, how contemptible his speech; whether a Privy Councillor or a parasite my answer would be—a blow.

"He has charged me with being connected with the rebels. The charge is utterly, totally, and meanly false. The right honourable member has told me I deserted a profession where wealth and station were the reward of industry and talent. If I mistake not, that gentleman endeavoured to obtain these rewards by the same means, but he soon deserted the occupations of a barrister for those of a parasite and pander. He fled from the labour of study to flatter at the table of the great. He found the Lord's parlour a better sphere for his exertions than the hall of the Four Courts; the house of a great man a more convenient way to power and place, and that it was easier for a statesman of middling talents to sell his friends than for a lawyer of no talents to sell his clients.

"The right honourable gentleman said I fled from the country after exciting rebellion and that I returned to raise another. The charge is false. The Civil War had not commenced when I left the kingdom, and I could not have returned without taking a part. On one side there was the camp of the rebel, on the other the camp of the minister, a greater traitor than the rebel. The stronghold of the constitution was nowhere to be found. Two

desperate parties were in arms against the constitution. I could not join the rebel—I could not join the Government. I could not join torture, I could not join half-hanging, I could not join free quarter. I could not take part with either. I was therefore absent from a scene where I could not be active without self-reproach or indifferent with safety. I think now, as I thought then, that the treason of the minister against the liberty of the people was infinitely worse than the rebellion of the people.

"The rebels were punished, but I missed the honourable gentleman on the scaffold. I have not returned, as the right honourable gentleman has said, to raise another storm. I have returned to discharge a debt, an honourable debt of gratitude to my country, which conferred a great reward for past services which, I am proud to say, was not greater than my desert. I have returned to protect that constitution of which I was the parent and the founder from the assassination of such men as the right honourable gentleman and his unworthy associates.

"They are corrupt, they are seditious; and at this very moment they are in conspiracy against their country. I have returned to refute a libel, false as it is malicious. Here I stand ready for impeachment or trial. I dare accusation. I defy the honourable gentleman. I defy the Government. I defy their whole phalanx: let them come forth. I tell the ministers I will neither give them quarter nor take it. I am here to lay the shattered remains

of my constitution on the floor of this House in defence of the liberties of my country."

A challenge followed this invective as inevitably as night follows day, and found Grattan eager to answer it. The Speaker sent for him to his private room and offered his good services to prevent the duel, but Grattan said that it was determined by the Government that he should be pistolled; as well now as later.

The duel was fought at Ball's Bridge. We have Grattan's own account of what happened:—

"When I had finished I left the House. Bowes Daly said to me, 'Go out immediately or something may occur to prevent you.'

"I remained in the Speaker's chamber and about the House till daylight. James Blackwood" (Lord Dufferin) "offered to be my second, and he got my friend Metge—a very good one—who brought my pistols to me there, as I feared to go home lest I should be arrested. General Craddock came with a challenge. We went to Ball's Bridge. On the ground the people cheered me. I had my pistol in one hand and my hat in the other. The sheriffs approached. We ran from thence, and when ordered we both fired. I hit Corry, he missed me.

"We were ordered to fire a second time, but at the signal we reserved our shots. The seconds thereupon made us give our honour to fire, and we did so. I do not know whether Corry fired at me the second time, I fired above him. I could have killed him if I chose, but I had no enmity to him. I had gotten a victory and knew that it could not

be more complete if he were killed. It was, however, dangerous to fire in the air, for he might have killed me, but I thought it better to run the chance than shoot him. He was bleeding when I went up to him, and he gave me his bloody hand. We had formerly been friends, but Corry was set on to do what he had done. A plan had been formed to make personal attacks on the Opposition, and certain men had been singled out for the purpose."

The eagerness with which Grattan was pursued appears plain from a statement of General Craddock, Corry's second in the duel, made to Admiral Blackwood, that when the sheriff appeared they forced him into a ditch and kept him there till the shots were exchanged.

A few days later Grattan, who was the most placable of men, called to inquire for Corry, and found his way to the bedroom where his late opponent lay. Corry gave him his bandaged hand and Grattan took it. A gentleman came into the room at the moment to whom Grattan was introduced by Cory. "Mr. Grattan, this is my brother Edward; Edward, this is Mr. Grattan, who will shoot you whenever you deserve it."

While the duel was in progress, and Grattan and Corry effectively paired, the Government scored another victory. The reinforcements had come up, and the motion directing "the Articles of Union to be presented" was carried by an increased majority of one hundred and fifty-eight to one hundred and fifteen. This was the beginning of the end. Though the Opposition still continued the struggle, it was the energy of despair.

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CHAPTER XXVII

THE UNION CONSUMMATED

A shameless proceeding—The usurpation of a bishop—Chairman of Committee but not a member of the House—An exciting interruption—He keeps his oath under difficulties—The Union is carried—Grattan's prophecy: "Thou art not conquered!"

THE Government displayed a shameless recklessness, a total disregard for even the semblance of propriety in carrying the Union through Committee. Let one illustration suffice.

At previous elections Mr. R. Annesley and General Gardiner had been returned for Clougher by the bishop, whose chaplain, steward, and domestics elected them by acclamation in the hall of the episcopal palace. At the last election, when the Union was in the air, they were opposed by Mr. Charles Ball and Colonel King, who received the votes of the resident inhabitants of the town whose privileges the bishop had usurped. The bishop's returning officer, however, declared the episcopal nominees re-elected, and they took their places in Parliament to vote for the Union.

Mr. Annesley, by the subservient majority of the Government, was nominated Chairman of the

Committee, and under his presidency every article of the Union was carried.

Meantime a petition had been lodged and was vigorously pressed. A Committee of the House was appointed to decide the matter, but every form of delay was interposed by the Government and every influence was attempted, even over the members of the Committee. Nothing was too shameful for the Chancellor or Chief Secretary.

After a month of minute investigation, however, an old document was traced to the Paper Office at the Castle by the Keeper of the Records. On its production, which the Government vainly endeavoured to prevent, the usurpation of the bishop was proved beyond a doubt.

Mr. Annesley, Chairman of Committee, and his colleague, General Gardiner, were expelled as usurpers from the House and Mr. Ball and Colonel King, dressed in the anti-Union uniform, took the seats from which they had been excluded while vital Union debates and divisions were in progress.

Grave doubts were expressed if resolutions could be legally carried under a chairman who was not a member of the House. But the Opposition knew that to raise the question, even successfully, would only be to prolong the agony. The triumph of the Union was assured. The evil work hastened rapidly to its own consummation.

A curious and startling incident occurred in one of the latest of the debates. The House was in Committee and Mr. Cooke was about to preside

when a stentorian voice cried out: "Now let the bloodiest assassin of all take the chair!"

There had been some days before a rumour afloat that an attempt would be made to blow up the House of Commons, and this cry was taken for the signal. In a moment the whole place was in a tumult and uproar of terror.

The Sergeant-at-Arms rushed to the gallery, sword in hand, and the interrupter was secured and after a strenuous resistance forced down into the body of the House, where he was assailed by the fear-maddened members of the Government. The intruder was a man of Herculean proportions, and while he flung his assailants from him, man after man, as a bull flings dogs, he delivered an impassioned protest against the Union.

It turned out on inquiry that he was Mr. Sinclair, one of the quietest and most inoffensive members of the Bar. Driven wild by his hatred of the Union, he had sworn that he would deliver a speech against it on the floor of the House of Commons, and he kept his word. He was committed to Newgate till the close of the sessions.

Every precaution was taken for the security of the Unionists on the night of the 7th of June, on which they consummated their treason to their country. All the avenues to the House were invested with military, and artillery was planted at the street corners. Every popular demonstration was vigorously suppressed.

Lord Castlereagh moved the third reading in a cold, business-like fashion, as if it were some petty

private Bill, no trace of feeling in face, voice, or gesture. Mr. Foster, who was one of its most strenuous opponents, put the question to the House, and as he declared "The ayes have it!" he flung the Bill contemptuously on the table.

The House of Lords was prepared for its reception, and it went through with complete ease under the guidance of Lord Clare. A small minority, however, made solemn protest against the outrage on the Constitution.

"Against the yoke it imposes and the dishonour it inflicts, we desire," they wrote, "to interpose our votes, and failing we transmit to aftertimes our names, in solemn protest in behalf of the parliamentary constitution of this realm, the liberty which it had secured, the trade which it protected, the connection it preserved, and the constitution which it supplied and fortified. This we feel ourselves called upon to do in support of our characters, our honour, and whatever is left to us worthy to be transmitted to our posterity.

> "Leinster, Arran, Mountcashel, Farnham, Belmore, Massy, Granard, Ludlow, Moira, William, Bishop of Down and Connor, Richard, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, Powerscourt, De Vesci, Charlemont, Kingston, Riversdale, Meath, Lismore, Sunderlin."

The Bill, as might be expected, encountered no opposition in England. On the 2nd of July it received the Royal assent. The ancient Parliament of Ireland had ceased to exist.

Even then there were great souls who did not believe in the final extinction of the Irish Parliament, who in the hour of death looked forward to its glorious resurrection. The grief with which Grattan saw his own great work destroyed was redeemed by that hope which has never since deserted the hearts of the Irish people in their sorest trouble, and which was never more confident than now.

"The constitution," he said in his last speech in the Irish House of Commons, "may be for a time so lost; the character of the country cannot be lost. The ministers of the Crown will, or may, perhaps, find that it is not so easy to put down for ever an ancient and respectable nation by abilities, however great, by power and corruption, however irresistible; Liberty may repair her golden beams and with redoubled heat animate the country; the cry of loyalty will not long continue against the principles of liberty; loyalty is a noble, a judicious, and capacious principle; but in these countries loyalty distinct from liberty is corruption, not loyalty.

"The cry of the connection will not in the end prevail against the principles of liberty. Connection is a wise and a profound policy; but connection without an Irish Parliament is connection without its own principle, without analogy of condition, without the pride of honour that should attend it; is innovation, is peril, is subjugation — not connection.

"The cry of disaffection will not, in the end, prevail against the principles of liberty.

" Identification is a solid and imperial maxim, necessary for the preservation of freedom ; necessary for that of the Empire ; but without union of hearts, with a separate Government and without a separate Parliament, identification is extinction, is dishonour, is conquest—not identification.

" Yet I do not give up the country : I see her in a swoon, but she is not dead : though in her tomb she lies helpless and motionless, still there is on her lips a spirit of life and on her cheek a glow of beauty.

> " ' Thou art not conquered ; beauty's ensign yet
> Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
> And Death's pale flag is not advanced there.' '

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CHAPTER XXVIII

AFTER

Unparalleled corruption, proclaimed and confessed—Gladstone —"The baseness and blackguardism of the Union"—Lecky, "The virus of corruption"—Desecration of the old House on College Green—A picture-gallery, a barracks, and a bank—Dispersal of relics—Laying the ghost—Plunket and Grattan—Different careers—Grattan's last testimony—Byron's epitaph.

ANY attempt to convey in summary the eloquence and power of the speeches against the Union was foredoomed to failure. On the other hand, it may be objected that the arguments in its favour have not been set out in adequate detail, and it must be confessed that there is force in this objection.

The only real and effective arguments urged by the Government in favour of the measure were intimidation and corruption, especially corruption. It was impossible to fully indicate the scope and weight of those arguments, partly on account of their magnitude and diversity, and partly because the greater part of the evidence was judiciously destroyed. To denounce the methods by which the Union was carried were to waste invective on unresisting infamy. All writers and all statesmen who

have studied the period are absolutely unanimous on the subject.

Mr. Gladstone spoke of the "baseness and blackguardism of the Union." He declared that there was no "blacker or fouler transaction in the history of mankind."

But perhaps the most conclusive testimony of all is Mr. Lecky, the calmest and most impartial of historians, who was himself an ardent champion of the Union and would be disposed if possible to mitigate the vileness of the foundation on which it rests. In his history of Ireland in the eighteenth century he sets out "the almost incredible corruption" of Castlereagh and his coadjutors in far greater detail than it has been given in this book, and he winds up with the following vivid summary of the situation :—

"Government patronage in all its branches was steadily employed in carrying the Union. The formal and authoritative announcement that the English Government were resolved to persevere until the Union was carried, that though it might be defeated session after session and Parliament, it would always be reintroduced, and that the support of it would be hereafter the main test by which all claims to Government favour would be determined, had an irresistible effect. A number of obscure men in non-political places were dismissed because either they or their relatives declined to support it. In spite of the Place Bill of 1793 there appears to have been in the last Irish House of Commons a large number of men who

held either civil places or pensions from the Crown or were generals or Staff officers. All these men knew that their promotion, most of them knew that their retention in their emoluments was in the power of the Government and would be determined by the votes they were about to give.

" It was part of the Union scheme that not more than twenty additional placemen should be introduced by it into the Imperial Parliament. Plunket, in one of his speeches, declared with great force and eloquence that if there had been only twenty placemen in the Irish House of Commons, or if the placemen who sat in it were allowed to vote by ballot according to their real wishes, it would have been utterly impossible to carry the Union.

" Hope, however, was a more powerful agent of corruption than fear, and I believe that it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that everything in the gift of the Crown in Ireland, in the Church, the army, the law, and the revenue, was at this period uniformly and steadily devoted to the single object of carrying the Union. From the great nobles who were bargaining for their marquisates and their ribbons ; from the Archbishop of Cashel, who agreed to support the Union on being promised the reversion of the see of Dublin and a permanent seat in the Imperial House of Lords, *the virus of corruption extended and descended through every fibre and artery of the political system,* including crowds of obscure men who had it in their power to assist or obstruct addresses on the question.

" No two facts are at this time more conspicuous than the immense preponderance of legal ability that was ranged in opposition to the Union and the immense profusion of legal honours that was lavished on its supporters. Twenty-three practising barristers voted for the Union in the House in 1800; in 1803 six of them were on the Bench, while eight others had received high honours from the Crown."

In one of his last letters just before leaving Ireland Lord Cornwallis sent to England a list of fifty promises of places, pensions, legal appointments, and promotions in the peerage which he had formally made on behalf of his Majesty's Government acting by the direction and authority of the ministers in England, but which, nevertheless, were still unfulfilled. With a single exception they seem to have all been made for the purpose of carrying the Union. In the list of names there are thirty-five members of the House of Commons who voted for it.

As late as 1830 Lord Gray " did not hesitate to avow his abiding conviction that there were never worse means resorted to for carrying any measure than those by which the Union was accomplished," and Grattan himself expressed his belief that " of those who voted for it not more than seven were unbribed."

In a conversation in the White House, in Washington, Mr. Roosevelt, then President of the United States, declared to the writer of this book that he could not understand how any man who

read Lecky's history of the Union could be a Unionist. "Least of all," he added, "can I understand how the man who wrote it is a Unionist."

The superb Parliament House on College Green was for a long time a white elephant in the hands of the Government which had extinguished the Parliament. Exhibitions of paintings were held there in 1802 and 1803, when John Comerford, the famous Irish miniature painter, exhibited for the first time. During the panic attendant on the attempt made by Robert Emmet, the Parliament House was used as a barrack, and in the succeeding year a fire broke out under the portico, injuring it so severely that it was found necessary to insert large pieces in several of the columns.

Later on it was proposed that Government should grant the vacant Parliament House to Trinity College, to be converted into lecture-halls. One of the obstacles raised to this suggestion was the probability of disturbances arising between the citizens and the students passing between the two edifices, and the construction of a connecting subterranean tunnel was proposed to obviate this objection. Ultimately, however, in accordance with an Act of Parliament, which was passed in June, 1802, and which enabled the Lord High Treasurer or Commissioner of his Majesty's Treasury in Ireland to sell, lease, convey, or dispose of the Parliament House in the city of Dublin and all the premises and appurtenances thereunto belonging to the Governor and Company of the Bank of Ireland, the building was purchased by

the Bank for the bulk sum of £40,000 and subject to an annual rent of £240.

The Bank directors, having offered premiums for plans for the adaptation of the building to its new purposes, various eminent English architects sent in their designs. The first prize of £300 was, however, adjudged to Henry Aaron Baker, master of the Dublin Society's Architectural School, who, fearing that his plans might be summarily rejected if he appeared in the competition as an Irish artist, had his drawings privately conveyed to London and sent thence to Dublin as from an English architect—the names of the competitors not being demanded until the final adjudication.

The first stone of the new works, under the superintendence of Francis Johnston, was laid by the Lord-Lieutenant, Earl Hardwicke, on the 8th of March, 1804. To connect the east and the west ends similarly with the centre circular screen walls were erected with Ionic columns, supporting an entablature similar to that of the portico with niches intervening. A considerable part of the internal buildings was altered, including the House of Commons and the Court of Requests, a portion of the latter now forming the Cash Office of the Bank. At the period of the elevation of the level of Westmoreland Street the steps approaching to the eastern front were filled up, and within the last few years the entrance door under this portico has been filled with masonry.

The three figures on the southern front of the building were executed by Edward Smith, but

from designs by Flaxman, as specially stipulated by the Bank directors, although the architect, Johnston, vainly endeavoured to protect the gifted Dublin artist from this humiliation, enumerating many fine works he had already executed in Dublin.

The Bank directors, however, found the great Irish sculptor to be a nervous, mild, unpretending man, bowing to those who should have stood uncovered in his presence. They therefore sent to London for designs and got three small pen-and-ink sketches from Flaxman. Even those were not given to Smith. Copies made by a young artist of that day were his only guides in executing those noble figures which now ornament the south portico. Flaxman demanded and received five hundred guineas for each design, and the timid, modest Smith got £150 for each of the statues.

In the lease from the Government to the Bank there was, Lecky tells us, a secret clause that the House of Commons should be so divided and partitioned as to retain nothing of its former character. "It was feared," he adds, "that disquieting ghosts should haunt the scenes that were consecrated by so many memories." The House of Lords, however, remains unchanged to the present day.

The Speaker's chair and mace of the Irish House of Commons are now in the National Museum. Mr. Foster, who was Speaker from 1785 to 1800, refused to surrender those historic treasures to any authority than that which had entrusted them to his care. They came by descent to his grandson,

the present Lord Masereen, who has lent them to the National Museum, and who would no doubt be happy to restore them to a Home Rule Parliament. The magnificent candelabrum which was suspended from the ceiling of the Irish House of Commons now hangs in the examination hall of Trinity College.

A curious history attaches to the great silver bell whose peal, singularly sweet and penetrating, was heard in every nook and cranny of the House summoning the members to division. In some unexplained fashion it found its way to the old Theatre Royal and was heard tolling the hours in play and opera to the delight of Dublin playgoers. When the theatre was burned it was melted, but the silver was recovered and the bell recast and transferred to the Gaiety Theatre. The benches of the Irish House of Commons are now in the hall of the Royal Irish Academy and on state occasions are occupied by the members. "The Woolsack," a handsome presidential chair, and the mace of the House of Lords are also preserved by the Royal Academy.

A few words must be written concerning the subsequent history of the two great opponents of the Union, Plunket and Grattan. Plunket commended himself to the Irish Government by a very strenuous speech in the prosecution of Robert Emmet, who seems to have taken literally the advice of Hannibal's father to his sons. Later on he accepted the profitable patronage of Lord Castlereagh, and, as his biographer and panegyrist,

Cashel Hoey, tells us, "when he did sell himself it was on the grand scale of his character. After making, as it was believed, £120,000 at the Bar, he took one after the other the most honourable and productive offices of his profession and a British peerage. He made one son a bishop, another a chairman of a county, a third a Commissioner of Bankrupts, a fourth Vicar of Bray, and scattered *spolia opima* of Church and State amongst a clan of kinsmen to the third and fourth degree."

Grattan in the Imperial Parliament as in the Irish, though with sadly diminished opportunity, devoted himself to the service of his country. He was specially earnest in urging the claims of the Irish Catholics, who had been duped by the authors of the Union, and his latest words were in favour of the cause that lay so near to his heart.

After his death, when the writ was moved in the Imperial Parliament for the vacant constituency of Dublin, there was a universal tribute to his character from all sides of the House. Lord Castlereagh felt constrained to profane his memory by a panegyric in which he audaciously declared that Grattan "had laid the foundation for that measure which had united the two islands of Great Britain into one empire and dispatched those mists which before prevented both countries from seeing their true interests."

The highest tribute to his memory, however, will be found in those resolutions in his own handwriting which he had hoped to move in the House and which after his death were read by Mr. Beecher.

"I have entreated Providence," he wrote, "to give me an opportunity of submitting to your Parliament a few propositions. They go to Roman Catholic interests and your own.

"1. Roman Catholics have a right to worship God as they choose. There exists no right and there exists no power to control them.

"2. That a committee be appointed with a view to repeal the civil and political disabilities which affect his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects on account of their religion.

"These resolutions," he concluded, "contain my sentiments. This is my testamentary disposition. I die with the love of liberty in my heart and this declaration in favour of my country in my hand."

His ashes rest in Westminster Abbey and his statue in white marble faces Fox in Westminster Hall. A still finer statue in bronze by the great Irish artist Foley stands in front of the old House in College Green. The arm is outstretched, the whole figure tense with enthusiasm as when he spoke the immortal words—

"Ireland is now a nation. In that new character I hail her, and bowing in her august presence I say '*Esto perpetua!*'"

Lord Brougham regarded Grattan as the greatest statesman and orator of his age. There is no exaggeration in the tribute Byron paid to his character and genius :—

> "Ever glorious Grattan, the best of the good,
> So simple in faith, so sublime in the rest.
> With all that Demosthenes wanted endowed
> And his rival or victor in all he possessed."

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CHAPTER XXIX

BLESSINGS OF A RESIDENT PARLIAMENT

Ireland under Grattan's Parliament—Improvement and prosperity—Sound finance—Public credit—Decrease of debt—Increased resources—Development of trade and commerce—Improvement of the metropolis—Public buildings and public palaces—Grattan's explanation—Because the Parliament sat in Ireland—Exodus of the Unionists.

THE strange fact remains that, unreformed as it was and corrupt to the core, persistently refusing representation to the great Catholic majority who constituted three-fourths of the people, Grattan's Parliament during the eighteen years of its existence unquestionably conferred inestimable benefits on the people of Ireland. On this point there is a concurrence of testimony that makes doubt impossible.

Lecky describes Irish finance during that period as "thoroughly sound." "Nothing is more certain," he writes, "than that for many years after the declaration of Irish Independence Irish wealth was rapidly augmenting."

At the end of the session 1787 Foster, the Speaker of the House, when presenting the Money Bills to the Viceroy for the Royal consent, declared: "The wisdom of the principle which the Commons

have established and preserved under your Grace's auspices is now powerfully felt throughout the kingdom in its many beneficial consequences. Public credit has gradually risen to a height unknown for many years. Agriculture has brought in new supplies of wealth, and the merchants and the manufacturers are each encouraged to extend their efforts by the security it has given them that no new tax will obstruct the progress of their works or impede the success of their speculations."

The Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer was able in 1788 to state from his place in the Irish House of Commons that "Irish public funds had been for several years past rated higher than English."

"The financial debates of 1788," Lecky goes on to say, "are singularly instructive, both on account of the rare amount of ability and knowledge they displayed and on account of the many incidental lights they throw on the condition of the country. The rate of interest on Irish public loans was this year assimilated to English."

Woodfall writes from Dublin, 1785, to Lord Aukland: "You who were here so lately would scarcely know this city, so much has it improved, so rapidly is it continuing to improve. I cannot but feel daily astonishment at the nobleness of the new buildings and the spacious improvements hourly making in the streets."

The old Custom House proved inadequate for the enormous increase of traffic, and a new and spacious building, designed by the great architect, Gandon, was opened in 1791. In 1782, under the adminis-

tration of Lord Carlisle, the Bank of Ireland was established in Dublin with a capital—enormous for those times—of a million and a half. The General Post Office, the Irish Academy, the College of Physicians, the College of Surgeons followed in rapid succession. Whole streets of stately mansions were erected, and the town houses of the great resident nobles rivalled the public buildings in magnificence. Ireland's increasing prosperity was proudly reflected in the splendour of the capital.

In his interesting treatise on Irish Trade, published in 1785, Lord Sheffield bears testimony that "the improvement in Ireland is as rapid as any country ever experienced, and the kingdom in general is in its most prosperous state." It would appear from the parliamentary debates that about this period English commercial jealousies were again violently excited by Irish prosperity.

In 1790 the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer stated in Parliament that it was his "pride and happiness to declare that he did not think it possible for any nation to have improved more in her circumstances. The debt of the nation has decreased £960,000 and the interest on the debt still remaining has decreased £17,000 a year, which was precisely the same thing as if the principal had been reduced £425,000 more. Add to this," he said, "our great increase in trade, our exports alone having increased £800,000 last year beyond the former period, and I believe that it would be difficult in the history of the world to show a nation rising faster in prosperity." In the Union debates

Lord Plunket proclaimed that "Ireland's trade revenues and manufactures had thriven beyond the hope or example of any other country."

Special importance must be attached to the evidence of Mr. Secretary Cooke, the subterranean engineer of the Union, who, in a pamphlet in 1799, declared it to be "universally admitted that for twenty years no country in the world had made such rapid advances in agriculture, manufacture, wealth, and prosperity."

But the most important of all is the testimony of Lord Clare at the very time he was engaged in a conspiracy to extinguish the Irish Parliament. "Concession and conciliation," he averred, "have produced a fresh stock of grievances and the discontent of Ireland has kept pace with her prosperity, for I am bold to say that there is not a nation in the habitable globe which has advanced in cultivation and commerce, in agriculture and manufacture, with the same rapidity in the same period."

In her admirable book on the financial relations of the two countries Miss Murray gives a vivid picture of the revival of trade, the prosperity of the country, and the splendour of the metropolis during the period that intervened between the Declaration of Independence and the Union.

"The industrial aspect of Ireland rapidly changed," she writes. "Ruined factories sprang into life and new ones were built. The old corn mills which had ceased working so long were everywhere busy. The populations of the towns began

to increase. The standard of living among the artisan class rose, and even the condition of the peasantry changed slightly for the better. Dublin, instead of being sunk in decay, assumed the appearance of a thriving town. In fact, the independent Irish legislature set itself to promote the material prosperity of the country in every possible way, and there is no doubt its efforts had much to say to the really surprising commercial progress which was made from 1780 until the years immediately preceding the Union. The Irish fisheries became the envy and admiration of Great Britain, the agriculture increased rapidly. Various manufactures in Ireland began to thrive; the manufacture of hats, boots and shoes, of candles and soap, of blankets and carpets, of woollens, of printed cottons and fustians, of cabinets and of glass, all sprang into importance, while linen manufacture, which had decayed during the American War, quickly revived, and in ten years the exports of various kinds doubled."

At first sight it seems almost incredible that a Parliament which, though brilliant in the extreme, was at the same time unrepresentative and corrupt, could be capable of such splendid service to the country. Grattan himself supplies the explanation —the Irish Parliament was resident in Ireland.

"With all its imperfections," he said, "its temptations and its corruptions, it was potent for good. Because its members sat in Ireland, because they sat in their own country and because at that time they had a country; because however influenced,

as many of its members were by places, however uninfluenced, as many of its members were by popular representation, yet they were influenced by Irish sympathy. They did not like to meet every hour faces that looked shame upon them. They did not like to stand in the sphere of their own infamy. Thus they acted as the Irish absentee did not act. They saved the country because they lived in it."

When the resident Parliament was extinguished the perpetrators of the Union abandoned the country which they had betrayed, refusing to share in the misery they had created. "They did not like to stand in the sphere of their own infamy." They took shelter in England, where there were no Irish faces to look shame upon them, where they could enjoy in peace the plunder of the betrayal and lavish on luxuries the rack-rents wrung from an impoverished tenantry at home.

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CHAPTER XXX

UNIONIST FINANCE

Dr. Johnson, "unite to rob"—An exorbitant contribution—Decline in credit—Increase in debt—The quack's prescription—Indiscriminate taxation—The Financial Relations Commission Report—Ireland overtaxed two and three-quarter millions a year—Total three hundred millions—Irish people should levy their own taxes and provide for their own expenditure.

THE prophecy of Grattan that the Union would bring ruin on the country was quickly and terribly realised. "Sir," said blunt Dr. Johnson to an Irishman, "don't unite with us or we will rob you." The philosopher's sound sense was justified by the event. The financial provisions of the Union were an elaborate scheme for the plunder of the poor nation by the rich. By a series of delusive tests, which were completely exposed by Grattan and Foster in the course of the Union debates, Ireland's equitable contribution to the total taxation of the United Kingdom was fixed by Pitt and Castlereagh as two-fifteenths of the whole. The proportion was, as Grattan and Foster clearly proved, grossly and manifestly excessive. Sir John Parnell, with great moderation, moved to reduce it to a tenth and his

proposition was rejected. Mr. Plunket estimated the true proportion at one-twelfth at the outside. Events proved that even those estimates were excessive.

In 1800 the total Irish National Debt stood at £28,541,157 and the English at £489,127,057. It was too bold a course, even for the authors of the Union, to propose that those debts should be amalgamated, and without amalgamation there could be no indiscriminate taxation. But there was an ingenious provision introduced to get rid of this difficulty. It was provided that when the English debt had so diminished or the Irish debt so increased that the proportion between the two became the same as the quota of taxation, the two exchequers should be thereupon amalgamated and thenceforth both countries be subject to indiscriminate taxation.

Attempts have been made to exonerate the authors of the Union from sinister intention in framing this curious provision. But it is abundantly plain that while they promised Ireland all sorts of financial advantages from the Union, they contemplated an increase of Ireland's National Debt out of all proportion to the increase of the National Debt of Great Britain.

The Union was forced on a reluctant Ireland as a great financial boon. Pitt declared that "Great Britain did not seek the Union from a pecuniary motive. . . . The measure," he said, "must infuse a large proportion of wealth into Ireland. The zeal, the spirit, and the liberality of Great Britain

gave ample proof that she would not tax Ireland too heavily, that Ireland would not be subjected to an increase of taxes or a load of debt."

Lord Castlereagh was even more encouraging as well as more definite in his promises. He pledged his reputation that "Ireland should gain a clear million a year by the passing of the Union." The result hardly justifies these pledges and prophecies.

In the sixteen years succeeding the Union Irish taxation rose from two and a half millions to over six. The average taxation for the entire period was four and a half, the residue was obtained by borrowing.

The expenditure charged against Ireland for that period was over one hundred and sixty millions. Mr. Pitt had guaranteed her against "a load of debt." Her National Debt of twenty-eight millions in that brief period increased to one hundred and forty-one millions.

The majority of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland in 1904 reported as follows :—

"All the expectations held out by Lord Castlereagh and his followers as to the financial benefits likely to arise in Ireland from the passing of the Act of Union were left unrealised, and all the predictions on the other side were verified. Ireland sank deeper and deeper into financial difficulties year by year, and long before the time fixed for the revision of the terms of her contract her debt had increased even beyond the proportion of two

to fifteen to that of Great Britain and it became clear that a continuation of the financial system carried out after the Union by the Imperial Parliament would speedily involve her in absolute bankruptcy. While the English debt had less than doubled the Irish debt had almost quadrupled in that period."

Pitt's diagnosis was justified. The Union had raised Ireland's debt to the standard required for indiscriminate taxation.

There is a story told of a Yankee quack called to attend a patient suffering from a mild attack of measles. The Yankee was puzzled. "I reckon," he said, "I ain't well posted in pustules, but you give the beggar this powder and it will knock him into fits. Then you send for me. I'm a demon at fits."

Pitt's Union powder knocked the beggar into fits and the doctor was ready with the next prescription.

Under the system of indiscriminate taxation the plunder of Ireland was perpetuated. The Financial Relation Commission Reports on the subject are absolutely conclusive. It is true that this Commission produced, in the apt phrase of Mr. Gladstone, "a litter of report." But all the Commissioners, with the exception of Sir David Barbour and Sir Thomas Sutherland, were unanimous in their finding that Ireland's equitable contribution to the exchequer could under no circumstances exceed one-twentieth of the whole. Six of the Commissioners—the Right Hon. C. E. Childers, the

Right Hon. the O'Connor Don, John E. Redmond, M.P., Charles E. Martin, W. A. Hunter, and G. Wolf—declared expressly: "In our opinion the ratio of the taxable capacity of Ireland as contrasted with that of Great Britain cannot be now regarded as more than one to twenty and that it is possibly much less."

Lord Farrar, Lord Welby, and Mr. B. W. Currie fix the proportion even lower than the Majority Report, while Mr. Thomas Sexton, the Hon. Edward Blake, and Mr. Henry Slattery, in an elaborate and carefully reasoned statement, put it as low as one-thirty-sixth.

An examination of the facts and arguments governing the Majority Report affords strong apparent justification for the view of Mr. Sexton and his colleagues. The majority find that the income of Ireland is no more than one-eighteenth of the income of Great Britain, but they confess that the proportion of the income was not the true standard of taxable capacity between a rich country and a poor one.

They cite with approval the declaration of Pitt in 1788 that "the smallest burden on a poor country was to be considered when compared with that of a rich one by no means in proportion to their several abilities, for if one country exceeded another in wealth and population and established commerce in proportion of two to one," he was nearly convinced "that country would be able to bear nearly ten times the burden the other would be equal to."

By the finding of the Commission the wealth of England exceeds the wealth of Ireland not in proportion of two to one but in a proportion of seventeen to one. A very simple sum in multiplication fixes her contribution if Pitt's view is to be literally accepted.

The Report further discusses what appears to be the reasonable suggestion of Sir Robert Giffen, "that when the total annual income of Great Britain and of Ireland has been ascertained, a sum representing a total minimum of substance—say £12 per annum per head—should be deducted from the gross aggregate wealth of each country. The ratio between the balances left might be the equitable ratio in which the two countries might contribute to revenue."

The majority admit if this system were adopted it would reduce Ireland's equitable contribution to one-fortieth of the whole. They find, moreover, that Ireland's taxable capacity is decreasing in proportion to Great Britain's, and it is fair, therefore, to assume that it is now far below the quota estimated in the Report published in 1896.

But the Irish case is so strong that the most moderate estimate suffices. Accepting the estimate of one-twentieth as the very most Ireland could be equitably called upon to pay, it is demonstrated from the figures "that the same system of taxation falling on the two countries has the effect of making Ireland contribute an annual revenue of two and three-quarter millions in excess of what would result from taxation according to

capacity." The total excess for the hundred and eleven years that have elapsed since the Union is, according to the Majority Report, something over three hundred millions.

It is to be remembered that these conclusions are not the extravagant guesses of partisan agitators; they are the sober findings after years of patient investigation of thirteen out of a commission of fifteen appointed by Parliament to consider the question. They are the deliberate judgment of the soundest of British financiers, such as the Right Hon. Hugh Childers, a former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Farrar, Lord Welby, Bertram W. Currie, and W. A. Hunter, M.P. Surely there is here a strong case, if not for restitution at least for liberality, on the part of the Imperial Exchequer in its dealings with Ireland.

The Majority Report scouts the suggestion that any compensation was made to Ireland for this gross over-taxation by advances on loans from the Imperial Treasury. It is pointed out that the loans were often made for "unproductive, useless, and even mischievous purposes"; moreover, in regard to a large proportion of those loans made at a high interest the Report declares that "loans granted under such circumstances are in reality another means of adding to the revenue of the State." Instead of being set down as special advantages given to the country where they more largely prevail, they should be entered on the opposite side of the account as additional sources of revenue derived from that country.

The Right Hon. H. Childers suggests that the restitution should take the form of substantial free contributions from the Imperial Exchequer. But this policy is not regarded as practical or advisable by his brother commissioners. On the contrary, Lord Farrar, Lord Welby, and B. W. Currie report: "We believe that the expenditure of public funds cannot be wisely and economically controlled unless those who have the disposal of public money are made responsible for the raising of it as well as the spending.

"One sure method of redressing the inequality which has been shown to exist between Great Britain and Ireland would be to put upon the Irish people the duty of levying their own taxes and providing for their own expenditure." This finding has very special interest at the present time.

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CHAPTER XXXI

REPEAL OR HOME RULE

Repeal or Home Rule—A vital distinction—Repeal undesirable and impossible—Home Rule a guarantee of loyalty—History of the movement—Debate between O'Connell and Isaac Butt—O'Connell converted to Home Rule—Conference accepted by the Irish people—Butt first Home Rule leader.

REMEMBERING how long the Irish question has been before the public, how exhaustively it has been discussed and dissected, it strikes one as strange that even to the present hour the vital distinction between Home Rule and Repeal of the Union should be so little understood. There are intelligent Englishmen who believe that Home Rule would be the sure forerunner of separation, there are intelligent Irishmen who believe that the restoration of Grattan's Parliament would be a greater boon to Ireland than Home Rule. A very little accurate knowledge of the subject demonstrates the absurdity of either view. The acceptance of Home Rule is an absolute bar to separation; the restoration of Grattan's Parliament as it existed before the Union is both undesirable and impossible.

Robbed of the beneficent and fostering influence of a native and resident Parliament, which had proved of such inestimable value during the period between 1782 and 1800 in developing the prosperity of the country; governed instead by an alien body without knowledge or sympathy; subjected, as we have seen, from the very first to an intolerable burden of taxation, it is no wonder that Ireland rapidly sank to a condition of the most lamentable poverty, no wonder that the agitation for the restoration of the native Parliament started almost immediately after the Union was passed and has lasted in different forms with ever growing intensity up to the present hour.

Naturally the "Repeal of the Union" was the form in which the remedy first presented itself to the Irish people. Within ten years O'Connell inaugurated his Repeal agitation, never wavering from the declaration in his maiden speech against the Union that, as a Catholic, he "would willingly purchase that Repeal by the imposition of the penal code in all its unmitigated ferocity."

On the 22nd of March, 1811, a remarkable article was published in the *Freeman's Journal*, which had long been a Government organ. "It would serve no useful purpose," writes the *Freeman*, "to attempt to describe the indescribable misery to which Ireland is reduced under the Union. We have lost our Peers and Commoners: they are all gone to reside in England; they extract the last shilling from the miserable Irish peasantry and

dissipate it abroad. A system of external commercial monopoly and a continual drain of absentees have reduced the metropolis from the capital of a kingdom to the miserable and degraded and fallen condition of a provincial town. Her noblemen's palaces exhibit but so many splendid ruins, her shopkeepers' dwellings are become the abodes of insolvency, and her artisans' hovels are the receptacles of poverty. We call upon Protestants and Dissenters to come forward and remove these miseries from their native land. Their Catholic countrymen are ready to join their constitutional exertions to procure a resident Parliament."

Alone among the nations of Europe Ireland's population has declined. It is to-day a round million less than it was a hundred and eleven years ago when the Union was carried. In 1801 the Irish population was 5,395,456, in 1910 it had sunk to 4,371,163. Within the same period the population of England increased from 8,892,536 to 32,527,843. In 1801 England's population was only two-thirds greater than Ireland, in 1910 it was more than eight times as great. Since the Union Ireland has been governed as a conquered province. The Habeas Corpus Act has been suspended, with brief intervals, for long periods. Over fifty different Coercion Acts have been provided for her by the Imperial Parliament. Every public man who enjoyed the confidence of the people, including the pacific and constitutional O'Connell, was prosecuted and imprisoned, transported or hanged.

Catholic Emancipation, which was the bribe dangled before the Catholics while the Union was in progress, was refused until nearly half a century later, when it was wrung from the Government by the fear, as the Duke of Wellington candidly confessed, of a civil war.

Since the Union there have been three distinct rebellions in Ireland: Emmet's rising, the rebellion of '48, and the Fenian movement twenty years later. There have been a score of famines of different degrees of intensity; indeed, until lately famine may be said to have been endemic in the country. In the awful visitation of '47 and '48 it is estimated that over half a million people perished of hunger and disease incident to hunger, and this at a time when the country produced food in abundance for all its inhabitants.

The Irish land laws were a disgrace to humanity and were administered with callous indifference to the sufferings of the people. Whole regions were desolated by exterminating landlords and the people driven out with less compunction than trespassing cattle to the emigrant ship or the poorhouse. In the exultant words of the *Times* during the great famine, "the Celts were going with a vengeance." Enforced emigration was the recognised Government policy. "When the people of the country," said John Stuart Mill, "are driven out of it wholesale because the Government will not make it a fit place to live in, that Government is, *ipso facto*, tried and condemned."

The eminent German investigator, Von Ramner,

who made a tour of Ireland in 1847, writes a very graphic picture of the operations of the land laws :—

"How shall I translate *tenants-at-will? Weg-jagbare?* Expellable? Serfs? But in the ancient days of vassalage it consisted in rather keeping the vassals attached to the soil and by no means driving them away. An ancient vassal is a lord compared to the present tenant-at-will, to whom the law affords no defence. Why not call them *Jagdbare* (chaseable)? But this difference lessens the analogy; for hares, stags, and deer there is a season during which no one is allowed to hunt them, whereas tenants-at-will are hunted all the year round. And if any one would defend his farm (as badgers and foxes are allowed to do), it is here denominated *rebellion*."

Trade and commerce languished and almost disappeared. The export trade, which at the date of the Union was a full seventh of England's, sank to an almost infinitesimal fraction. The wealthy absentees were like sponges that squeezed Ireland dry, to pour her wealth into England. Ireland's brilliant metropolis sank to the level of a third-class provincial town. Whole streets of stately mansions were converted into public offices or into dilapidated and unsanitary slums.

All through this ordeal the Irish people doggedly persisted in the struggle for a native Government. Robert Emmet in 1803, O'Brien and Mitchell in '48, Stephens and his Fenian Brotherhood twenty years later strove to establish by force an Irish republic. O'Connell vainly sought by legal and

constitutional agitation to secure Repeal of the Union, Butt, and after him Parnell, agitated for Home Rule.

The project of an Irish republic was an open demand for separation. In Repeal of the Union separation was inevitably involved. Against separation England had set her face. An Irish republic or an Irish independent Parliament could be wrung from her only as the Declaration of Independence had been wrung by force or fear of force. When Butt's great Home Rule Conference was held in the Rotunda in November, 1873, the restoration of an Irish Parliament became for the first time a question of practical politics.

At a meeting of the Dublin Corporation in 1843, Isaac Butt, then a brilliant young barrister, was the spokesman of the Unionist minority opposed to Alderman Daniel O'Connell's motion in favour of Repeal, which was carried after an elaborate debate by a majority of forty-one to fifteen. It was said that O'Connell at the conclusion of the debate prophesied that Butt would yet be the leader of the National party in Ireland. However that may be, a careful perusal of Butt's long and elaborate speech against Repeal reveals no single argument against the alternative policy of Home Rule.

He objected, as Macaulay had objected, to O'Connell shirking the details of his policy of Repeal. He pointed out that there never was a constitution in Ireland which gave to an English king responsible Irish advisers, and he significantly

concluded: "If Alderman O'Connell called for an Irish Cabinet as well as an Irish Parliament it would be a very different question."

O'Connell himself a little later seems to have arrived at the same conclusion. When Sturge Brown, a well-known English politician, suggested a federal solution of the question of the Irish difficulty, the suggestion was favourably received by O'Connell. "The Irish," he wrote, "desire a Parliament to regulate all the local affairs of Ireland; in matters relating wholly to England they do not desire to interfere." Again in December, 1844, he wrote: "I will own that since I have come to contemplate the specific differences, such as they are, between simple Repeal and federalism I do at present feel a preference for federalism as tending more to the utility of Ireland and the maintenance of her connection than Repeal."

The great Home Rule Conference in the Rotunda in 1873 under the presidency of Isaac Butt followed close on the disestablishment of the Irish Protestant Church, and it is worthy of note that a large number of prominent Protestants and Conservatives participated actively in the proceedings and expressed their hearty concurrence in the policy of Home Rule. Dr. Maunsell, the editor and proprietor of the Dublin Conservative organ, the *Evening Mail*, was one of the most active supporters of the policy. Colonel King Harman, afterwards one of Mr. Balfour's unpaid coadjutors in Coercion, declared: "We have come here to say that Home Rule is a matter of vital necessity not only for this country

but for Great Britain." Lord Francis Cunningham regretted he was unable to attend.

Lord French wrote to "wish success to the movement for an Irish Parliament on a federal principle which would include all the benefits which could be reasonably expected from an unqualified repeal of the statute by which the legislative Union was so unjustly enacted and at the same time afford Ireland the great advantage of being duly represented on all Imperial questions."

Lord Robert Montague proclaimed his "hearty good wishes for the success of the movement," and the O'Connor Don expressed his "decided opinion in favour of self-government," though he did not think the moment opportune for its concession.

The Home Rule policy formulated at the Rotunda Conference has been ever since the policy of the Nationalists of Ireland. It differs essentially from the old policy of Repeal. By Repeal, as has been already said, separation is necessarily implied. Home Rule repudiates separation. By the acceptance of Home Rule the Irish people for the first time abandon their claim to an independent Parliament and attorn to the Union. By the acceptance of Home Rule the absolute supremacy of the Imperial Parliament is expressly acknowledged.

To talk of such a compact as the disruption of the Empire is the sheerest absurdity. The Empire gains by Home Rule the freely tendered loyalty of the one country whose loyalty is most essential

and whose disloyalty has heretofore been most dangerous to its stability.

While Home Rule commends itself to England as a pledge of Ireland's loyalty to the Empire, to Ireland it offers far greater advantages than the impossible policy of Repeal. Grattan's Parliament was invaluable solely because it was native and resident. The Home Rule Parliament will be both, but it will be, moreover, what Grattan's Parliament never was, fully representative, wholly incorruptible. Above all and beyond all, under Home Rule there will be for the first time an Irish Executive responsible to Parliament and therefore responsible to the people.

Under Grattan's Parliament an alien Executive controlled the Irish House of Commons; under Home Rule the Irish House of Commons will control a native Executive.

Grattan's Parliament, nominally independent, was completely subservient to the Executive that corrupted it. The Home Rule Parliament will, so far as Irish affairs are concerned, be practically supreme. There will be no temptation because there will be no power to interfere in Imperial concerns such as the selection of a regent or the declaration of a war. Even in Irish affairs, it is true, the veto of the Imperial Parliament will remain to be exercised in an emergency, but it is reasonable to hope that no such emergency will arise.

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Sydney P. Hall.] [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL.

A portrait in the National Gallery of Ireland.

J. B. Yeats, R.H.A. [*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

ISAAC BUTT.

In the National Gallery of Ireland.

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CHAPTER XXXII

THE FINAL STRUGGLE

Home Rule refused a hearing—Parnell succeeds Butt—The man that made John Bull listen—His character—Agitation and obstruction—Harnessing Home Rule to the agrarian movement—Taking off his coat—Liberal Coercion—The Kilmainham Treaty—The Phœnix Park murder—More Coercion—The Conservatives coquet with Home Rule—Gladstone declares for Home Rule—His prophecy in the hour of defeat.—Unionist Coercion—Unionist failure.

THE Home Rule policy was for a long period refused a hearing in England. Neither Parliament nor people took thought to distinguish between the old demand and the new; and the genial Butt, with all his genius, statesmanship, and eloquence, was not the man to force the question on their unwilling attention. So it came to pass that the young Protestant, Parnell, stepped into his place, and by rougher and more effective measures he, in the words of an eminent Yankee admirer, "forced John Bull to listen."

Parnell was a strange type of man for an Irish democratic leader, wholly different from Grattan, O'Connell, and Butt. A young Protestant aristocrat, reserved, self-contained, with no touch of Irish

geniality, and in the beginning of his career a stammering and ineffective speaker, he appeared of all men least fitted for the arduous position which he wrenched with a strong hand from all competitors. His qualifications were a clear intellect, stern determination, and a Napoleonic power in the selection, direction, control, and employment of his officers. In later days he grew to be a powerful speaker, but never in what is commonly regarded as the Irish style. There were no flowers or flourishes in his speeches. They were distinguished rather by clearness, force, and a deadly earnestness that was terribly effective—

> "And those who loved a flaming eloquence
> Mistook his calm, intense white heat for cold.'

Aggressive obstruction in the House of Commons and aggressive agrarian agitation in Ireland were the drastic measures which Parnell employed to enforce British attention to his demand. It was Michael Davitt that induced Parnell to "harness Home Rule to the land agitation," but Parnell himself declared that he would "never have taken off his coat" for the land war if it were not for the larger issue behind. It was a long fight and a fierce one between the Irish Party, disciplined and led by Parnell against both the great English parties combined in their opposition to Home Rule, backed by a self-seeking majority of the Irish representatives in Westminster elected on a restrictive franchise which belied the real voice of the people.

Mr. Gladstone, under the common delusion that

the Land Question was the only real obstacle to British government in Ireland, passed the beneficent Land Act of 1881, granting what are known as the three F's—fair rents, free sale, and fixity of tenure—to the tenants of Ireland.

But the agitation continued, and in an evil moment, impelled by Mr. Foster, who was disappointed by his reception in Ireland, Gladstone resorted to Coercion. An Act was passed which gave the Castle Government in Ireland an unlimited power of imprisonment, indiscriminately without accusation or trial, on the mere suspicion of the police. The Act purported to be directed against "village ruffians" who fomented criminal agitation, but by degrees its operation came to include the most prominent members of Parliament. "Suspect" became a title of honour in Ireland, and finally the leader of the Irish people was himself arrested.

But the agitation grew all the more fierce and deadly when, in the triumphant words of an Irish Viceroy, "it was driven under the surface." The responsible leaders being removed way was made clear for secret societies and murder organisations.

Mr. Gladstone quickly revolted against this Coercian policy, so foreign to his character and career. He broke with Mr. Foster. Parnell was released on an understanding known to opponents as the "Kilmainham Treaty" and Home Rule seemed on the straight, short road to success when a disastrous event overthrew the hopes of the nation.

A murder organisation, known as the "Invin-

cibles," which had originated in Coercion, struck at the moment that Coercion was removed.

Lord Frederick Cavendish, brother of the then Lord Hartington, who came as Chief Secretary with a message of peace to Ireland, was assassinated with the Under-Secretary, Mr. Burke, in the Phœnix Park, and though the Nationalist leaders vigorously denounced the murder, the Home Rule Bill was thereby thrown back for a generation. There was a tremendous anti-Irish reaction in England and the Liberals again resorted to Coercion.

At the close of the Liberal administration the Conservatives, who came into power for a short time on a snatch division, began to coquet with Home Rule. Lord Randolph Churchill was hand in glove with the Irish Party, Lord Salisbury made a speech in which an Irish Parliament with control of the Irish customs was foreshadowed, and the Conservative Lord-Lieutenant Cadogan was commissioned to negotiate in an empty house in Dublin the terms of an alliance with Mr. Parnell.

In the General Election that followed the whole Nationalist vote in Great Britain was cast solid for the Conservatives, and though Gladstone was returned with a substantial majority, it was not what he demanded in his election address—a majority independent of the Irish Party.

This General Election was made memorable by the fact that the enlargement of the franchise enabled the great majority of the people of Ireland for the first time to give constitutional expression

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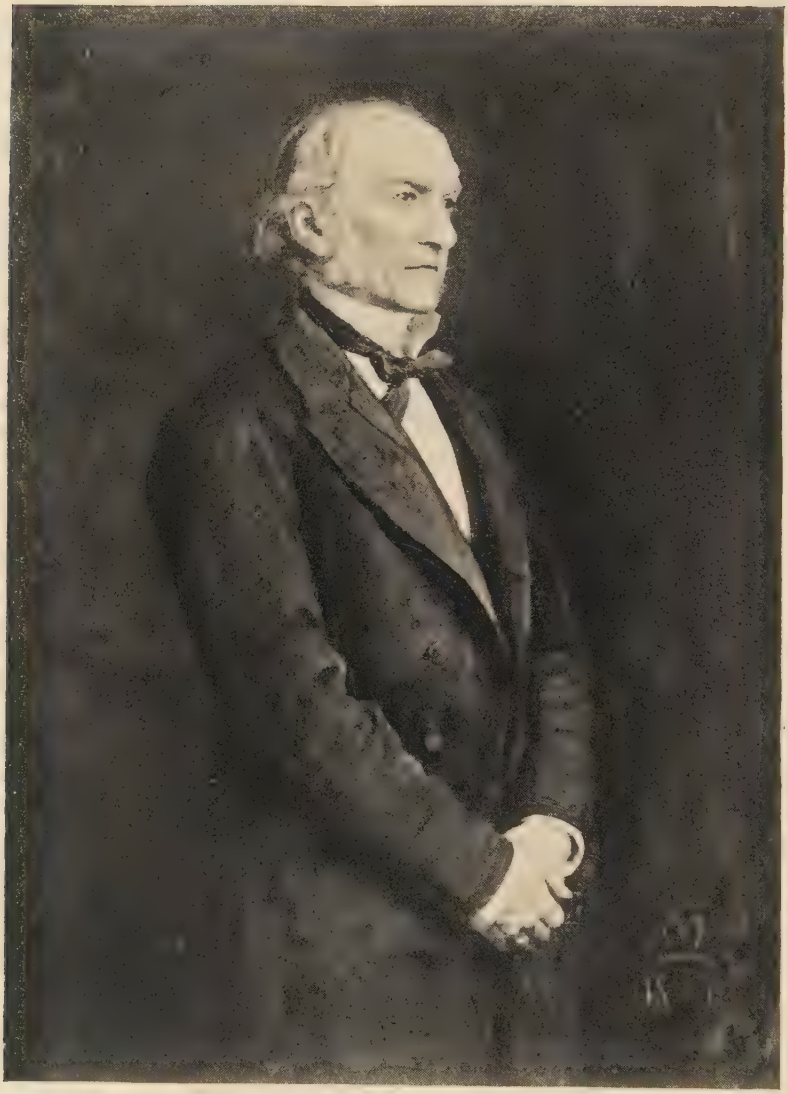

Sir J. E. Millais, P.R.A.] [*Photo Emery Walker.*

W. E. GLADSTONE.

In the National Gallery, London.

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to their views. Out of an electorate of one hundred and three, eighty-six Home Rule representatives were returned, and Irish Unionist representation, including the two University members, was only seventeen. That proportion has been practically maintained during eight successive General Elections.

Convinced by the overwhelming majority in its favour that the Irish people were in earnest in the demand, Mr. Gladstone declared in favour of Home Rule. The result was a split in his own party and a consolidation of the Conservatives in opposition to his policy. Lord Cadogan and his mission were repudiated. Lord Randolph Churchill is reported to have said to one of the Nationalist leaders, "I have done all I could for you; it was no use, now I will do all I can against you."

The Liberal-Unionists and Conservatives joined forces, Mr. Gladstone was defeated, and Home Rule rejected. It is interesting at the present time to recall Mr. Gladstone's prophecy in the very hour of his defeat.

In the peroration of his speech on the second reading he said: "Go into the length and breadth of the world, ransack the literature of the world, find if you can a single voice, a single book in which the conduct of England towards Ireland is anywhere treated except with profound and bitter condemnation. Are these the traditions by which you are exhorted to stand? No! they are the sad exception to the glory of your country, they are a broad black blot on the pages of its history.

"You have rank, you have organisation," he concluded; "what have we? We think we have the people's heart, we believe and we know that we have the promise of the harvest of the future. I believe there is in the breast of many a man who means to vote against us to-night a profound misgiving, approaching even to a conviction that the end will be as we foresee and not as you do, that the ebbing tide is with you and the flowing tide with us."

The Unionist Party in their turn found it impossible to govern Ireland under the ordinary law. A perpetual Coercion Act was passed known in Ireland as "Jubilee Coercion" because it passed in the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. New offences were created under the Act and new tribunals constituted to try them. Trial by jury was abolished in the cases where its protection was most essential and the liberties of political opponents were subjected to the irresponsible discretion of two resident magistrates selected by the Government.

The total number of victims of the Jubilee Coercion Act was well over a thousand. This number includes twenty-six members of Parliament, more than a fourth of the entire representation of the country, many of whom underwent several terms of imprisonment. It includes twelve of the most respected and beloved of Irish priests and the Lord Mayors of all the principal towns outside Ulster—Dublin, Cork, Sligo, and Clonmel among the rest. Some scores of newspaper men,

from the highest positions to the lowest, proprietors, editors, reporters, printers, and newsvendors, were imprisoned. Town Commissioners and Poor Law Guardians uncounted swelled the long list of victims. A sprinkling of the professional classes, barristers, doctors, and solicitors, with a swarm of shopkeepers and farmers, went to make up the grand total.

To these must be added an English workingman's delegate, an English member of Parliament, and an English country gentleman of large property and high position in his own country.

The victims of Coercion included all ages and sexes, old men and women tottering on the grave's brink and young girls and boys not yet entered on their teens. They were convicted by "salaried officials," as Lord Morley described them, "removable and promovable by the Government" for crimes created by the Coercion Act.

The Coercion regime culminated in a conspiracy originating with the *Times* newspaper to convict Parnell and his colleagues by means of forged letters of direct connivance with the Phœnix Park murders. After an exhaustive and exhausting trial the conspiracy was exploded before a commission of three Unionist judges selected, in defiance of Mr. Parnell's protest, to try him on this infamous charge.

With the Coercion administration already tottering to its fall everything promised an overwhelming victory for Home Rule at the approaching General Election, when the news of the O'Shea and

Parnell divorce burst like a bombshell on the Nationalists.

It would be invidious to enter at all into the merits of the bitter conflict that followed in Ireland. On one side was strenuous loyalty to a great leader and on the other to a great cause. It is material only to remember that when the General Election came to which the Irish Nationalists had looked forward with such eager anticipations they were engaged in a desperate civil war, and that, despite the most adverse circumstances, a solid majority of forty was returned for Gladstone and Home Rule and a Bill was carried through the House of Commons, to be rejected by the House of Lords.

The short term of Lord Rosebery's feeble and vacillating premiership sufficed to damp the enthusiasm and dissolve the cohesion of the Liberals, and there followed a long spell of Unionist government. Just before their expulsion from office the Unionists again attempted a devolution intrigue with the Nationalists, again failed and again repudiated their emissary, Mr. Wyndham, as Lord Cadogan had been formerly repudiated.

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CHAPTER XXXIII

THE IMPENDING SETTLEMENT

Campbell-Bannerman's declaration—Raising the Home Rule flag—Three successive verdicts—The Lords powerless—Ulsteria—Fair-minded Unionists—An Irish Parliament with responsible Executive—The Imperial veto retained—Irish control of Irish finance—Collection and expenditure of taxes—Men, not money—Home Rule will secure the integrity of the Empire.

UNDER the Campbell-Bannerman administration Home Rule revived. The Premier declared himself so strongly in its favour that Lord Rosebery protested that "he had nailed the Home Rule colours to the mast" and joined the Unionists in opposing his return. The Unionists raised the same cry. At the last three elections the main issue, as far as the Unionists could make it so, was Home Rule. In the Press and on the platform, by placard and pamphlet they unanimously proclaimed that every vote given for a Liberal was a vote for Home Rule, that the return of the Liberals to power meant the establishment of an Irish Parliament. The electorate took them at their word and three times in succession returned a Liberal Government, a record in the history of the two great parties in

England. The Unionists cannot reasonably complain if effect is given to a thrice-repeated verdict on an issue of their own defining.

The Government, with an efficient majority at their backs, are pledged to carry a Home Rule Bill through Parliament; the House of Lords have some little power left to obstruct but none to reject it.

It is only fair to remember that the Liberal Government, in giving effect to their pledges and transferring the Irish Party from Westminster to College Green, are sacrificing a decisive party advantage. Almost every great Liberal reform in the Imperial Parliament has been carried by the aid of the Irish vote. By the passage of Home Rule the Liberal majority in the present Parliament will be substantially reduced.

No serious attention is paid in any quarter to the rant about an Orange rebellion, neatly nicknamed "Ulsteria" by Campbell-Bannerman. The notion of Sir Edward Carson, K.C., an elderly eminent lawyer with an enormous practice to attend to, leading the Orange rebels to glory or the grave is too absurd to be even amusing.

It is to be remembered that the same faction threatened to "kick the Queen's crown into the Boyne" and "to die in the last ditch" if the Irish Church was disestablished. Reactionaries always oppose such dismal threats and prophecies to any great measure of reform. On the eve of Catholic Emancipation Lord Eldon (like Sir Edward Carson, an elderly eminent lawyer) declared that "if ever

a Roman Catholic was permitted to form part of the constitution of this country, that from that moment the sun of Great Britain would set," and the Duke of Cumberland swore if the King gave his consent to a Bill involving such principles he would leave the country and never return. The Bill was passed, the sun of Great Britain continued to shine and the Duke stayed where he was in contented enjoyment of his income and honours.

If Sir Edward Carson, who is a candidate for the Lord Chancellorship of England, feels the slightest desire to join in the Sandy Row riots in Belfast (the only form the civil war is likely to assume), he will remember the warning addressed under similar circumstances by Michael Davitt to Judge Barton, "the way to the Bench is not through the dock."

Though the ravings of a small but turbulent faction, who are encouraged in their absurdities by men who should know better, may be safely ignored, there is a great body of Unionist opinion in Ireland which it is essential to conciliate. Intelligent Irish Unionists are, of course, not affected in the slightest degree by the fear of persecution of Protestants or property under a Home Rule Parliament. If Home Rule must come, as it must, they are willing to take an honourable part in conducting the government and promoting the prosperity of their country. From their point of view not less than from the Nationalist it is desirable that the newly constituted Parliament should allow full scope for the exercise of their ability and the

fulfilment of their legitimate ambition. There must be a genuine Irish Parliament and a genuine Irish Executive.

"The repealers," said Macaulay on the occasion already referred to, "may be refuted out of their own mouths. They say that Great Britain and Ireland ought to have one executive power. But the legislature has the most important share of the executive power, therefore on the confession of the repealers themselves Great Britain and Ireland ought to have one legislature." Given the premises the conclusion is sound, but no such objection can be raised to two Parliaments and two distinct Executives.

One objection may be worth answering. It was used with great force by Dr. Wallace, M.P., in the House of Commons when Home Rule was carried by Mr. Gladstone and is likely to be heard of again. Mr. Gladstone, realising the difficulty of having members of Parliament competent to speak and vote on some questions and not on others, determined that the Irish representatives returned after Home Rule to the Imperial Parliament should be returned for all purposes. To this it was objected that Ireland, having been accorded control of her own affairs, should have no right to interfere in the local affairs of Great Britain. The objection is more specious than real. The Irish minority in the Imperial Parliament would indeed have a nominal right to interfere in English affairs, but the English majority would have an effective right to interfere in Irish affairs. It is reasonable to

assume that neither would wantonly exercise a barren right from which neither could derive advantage. It is quite certain that the Irish would not provoke a quarrel in which they are bound to have the worst of it.

The Home Rule Bill now before Parliament has been accepted with enthusiasm by Irish Nationalists and by the Irish race beyond the seas. It creates an Irish Parliament and an Executive dependent on that Parliament and thereby confides the whole administration (with some not very important reservations) to the representatives of the people. It is a final settlement of the Irish question and the close of the long feud between two neighbouring nations whom Nature meant to be friends.

The financial arrangement was universally regarded as the most difficult and the most important part of the international settlement. By the ingenious provisions of the Bill the difficulty has been admirably overcome. For the first time in the history of their commercial relations England has been just if not generous to Ireland. The financial problem has completely changed since the time when Mr. Gladstone had to deal with it. Ireland then made a substantial contribution to Imperial purposes, and Mr. Gladstone's Bill provided for the continuance of that contribution. But even then Mr. Gladstone prophesied that if Home Rule were not conceded the Irish surplus would, as years went by, be converted into an ever-increasing deficit, a prophecy which has been lamentably realised. Ireland no longer contributes

a farthing to Imperial purposes. On the contrary, her Government is run at a loss to the Imperial exchequer of a million and a half a year, and the deficit is rapidly increasing. Moreover, in Mr. Gladstone's time the Report of the Financial Relations Commission had not yet been published, and the fable was generally accepted that Ireland had profited financially by her connection with the "rich and generous sister" by whom she had, in plain truth, been shamelessly plundered.

The present Bill takes all those circumstances into account. It absolutely secures to Ireland an annual income of twelve millions, a sum equivalent to her present expenditure with a half million extra by way of surplus to assist her to start housekeeping on her own account. She is, moreover, to have the advantage of any economies she can make in her present extravagant expenditure.

The scheme entails a temporary grant of two millions a year from the British Exchequer, but the Report of the Financial Relations Commission shows this grant must be regarded not as alms but restitution. Provision is made that as the increased prosperity of Ireland and her consequent increased taxable capacity gives a larger yield on existing taxation this grant will be automatically reduced and extinguished, and the way be made clear for revision and resettlement, giving Ireland full control over the collection and expenditure of her own revenue. England has therefore a direct interest in accelerating Irish prosperity.

It is a significant contrast between the present arrangement and the Act of Union that, while the Act of Union contemplated piling up an Irish debt as the foundation of a financial settlement, the present Bill looks forward to the increased prosperity of the country. Nor is that anticipation likely to be disappointed. Economies on a large scale in Irish income must, indeed, for some time prove impossible. The scrupulous care that Parliament takes of vested interest prevents any immediate reduction of office, salary, or pension, but as years go by substantial reductions are sure to be effected.

The extravagance of Irish administration has not been questioned, and if questioned is capable of easy demonstration. Worse still, Irish administration is inefficient as it is extravagant. Money is lavished where it should be grudged, it is grudged where it should be lavished.

In Ireland law and police cost the enormous sum of £2,453,903. In England, including the £500,000 paid by fees for the County Court jurisdiction, the cost is about the same, while in Scotland, with a population of more than five hundred thousand in excess of Ireland, the cost of law and police is no more than £227,415. On the other hand, England spends £14,563,308 on education, Scotland £2,259,051, and Ireland only £1,829,052. With due economy there can be no reasonable doubt that Irish government could be run on the income provided by the Bill, with a handsome surplus for the improvement of her education and the development of her resources.

It is interesting to note that Ireland's peace expenditure at the date of the Union, with a much larger population than now, was little over a million a year. Though a modern Government has many expenses undreamt of in those days, eleven millions a year is a handsome margin to meet them.

Denmark, in 1910, ran its Government, including monarchy, army, and navy, on a revenue of seven and a half millions, Holland on less than six, and Switzerland on less than four.

While there is no danger of national bankruptcy threatened by Unionist pessimists, at the same time the surplus of half a million provided by the Bill cannot for the first few years be regarded as excessive. Ireland out of that surplus will have to meet all the expenses of a Home Rule Parliament and administration, including the repurchase and refitment of the old House on College Green.

This seeming detail is a matter of real importance, and should be specially provided for in the Bill. Irish sentiment counts for much, and Irish sentiment at home and abroad demands that the new Parliament should be established in the old House consecrated by the memory of Grattan and liberty. In this book many witnesses have been called to the architectural splendour of the building, but the illustrations provided are the most conclusive testimony of all. Of the sufficiency of accommodation no question can be made. Grattan's Parliament numbered three hundred members of the House of Commons—a hundred and sixty-four

members only are provided for by the Bill; the Senate will, of course, be far less numerous than the old Irish House of Lords. Nor can the cost prove unreasonable. The Bank of Ireland purchased the building for £40,000, subject to a rent of £240 a year. Parliament can afford to offer them a handsome bonus on their bargain.

While the Bill offers to Ireland immediate solvency and future prosperity, its provisions are not less favourable to England. It cuts her loss at the present figure, and relieves her from the burden of an ever-increasing Irish deficit under the existing system. It holds out prospect in the near future of an Ireland financially independent making a reasonable contribution to the purposes of the Empire to which, for the first time, she is proud to belong. The amazing development of Irish prosperity by Grattan's Parliament, unreformed, unrepresentative, and corrupt, but resident in the country it governed, is an encouraging augury that under a native Parliament, freely and fully representing every class and creed and inspiring and controlling a native Executive, the period of Ireland's financial independence cannot be long delayed.

But it is not in financial advantage that England counts her chief gain from Home Rule. It is loyalty, not tribute, she requires from Ireland; men, not money. The time has gone by for those petty international jealousies which in the eighteenth century strangled Irish trade and commerce, in the supposed interest of a British

monopoly. It is now recognised that a prosperous and contented Ireland is the best security of the continued prosperity of Great Britain. As Mr. Gladstone so often said, "The whole world recognises the justice of the Irish claim." The great American Republic welcomes the measure with enthusiasm, and all the loyal and self-governed colonies are eager to welcome a loyal and self-governed Ireland into the brotherhood of the Empire.

THE END.

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